

N O T E S

ON THE

PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS

OF

Lord *BOLINGBROKE*.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

On the Creation of the World; the Credibility of the Mosaical and Old Testament History; the Nature and Properties of the human Soul and the Objects of human Science.

PART II.

On the Truth and Evidences of the Christian Religion.

PART III.

On the moral Perfections of the Deity and a future State.

Cum his, viris equisque, ut dicitur, si honestatem tueri & retinere sententia est, decertandum est. Cic. de Offic.

By CHARLES BULKLEY.

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PHILLOSOPHY

1944



1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$ if and only if the matrix A is Hurwitz. This result is obtained by the method of the variation of constants.

12



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THE following *Notes* were originally designed for nothing more than to contribute to the amusements of an Evening-Paper. And accordingly they were, from the beginning to page 93. published in the *Evening-Advertiser*, during the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September, 1754. The Author found himself insensibly led on to a more distinct and copious consideration of the subjects before him, than he was at first aware of. And he hopes, that the communicating his thoughts upon them in this other manner, may not be without its use. He calls them, "*Notes on the philosophical Writings of Lord Bolingbroke*," because they are pursued thro' all the Letters, Essays, and Fragments, that have been lately published under that title in five volumes, 8vo. There

iv ADVERTISEMENT.

is indeed, a letter consisting of about forty pages, and addressed to Mr. Pope, which is plainly of the philosophical kind; of which however no notice has been taken in these *Notes*. They were designed only by way of animadversion upon all the new pieces, which were contained in the complete edition of his Lordship's works in five volumes, 4to. But the letter had been published among some political tracts, before that edition appeared. And it was for this reason, as we suppose, that it was not inserted in that collection of his philosophical writings, referred to above. Nevertheless, as his Lordship himself styles it, Vol. iii. p. 343. an *introduction* to the several treatises criticised in the *Notes*, we may here, and by way of introduction likewise, offer a remark or two upon it. It is written in a very pleasurable style, and appears to have been intended as a kind of abstract of the "letters, essays" &c. which were afterwards communicated to the world. If so, it is a very hasty and superficial one. But however that be, it affords us, in fact, very little matter for criticism, that is sufficiently interesting, and at the same time distinct from the subjects treated of in the following *Notes*.

His

ADVERTISEMENT. 5

His Lordship observes in this Letter, p. 326. (and the maxim is again and again inculcated in his larger essays,) that

Nothing can be true of mind any more than of body, that is repugnant to *the phaenomena*, and *that* an intellectual hypothesis, which is not supported by the intellectual phaenomena, is, at least, as ridiculous, as a corporeal hypothesis, which is not supported by the corporeal phaenomena.

This is an observation, the propriety of which cannot possibly be disputed. It is therefore upon these very terms, that we have undertaken to examine his Lordship's theory concerning the human mind; of which *the high opinion* entertained is, he tells us in this Letter, p. 328, a *primitive error* upon the subject of the "first philosophy." And we cannot but apprehend, that in the following *Notes* such mental phaenomena have been pointed out as stand in direct and manifest repugnancy to his Lordship's hypothesis, and must consequently prove it, by virtue of his own appeal, to be both false and *ridiculous*. He tells us in the same Letter, p. 331. that

Truth

vi A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Truth and falshood, knowlege and ignorance, revelations of the Creator, inventions of the creature, dictates of reason, fallies of enthusiasm, have been blended so long together in our systems of theology, that it may be thought dangerous to separate them, lest by attacking some parts of these systems we should shake the whole.

That Lord Bolingbroke was not himself much terrified by any danger of this sort, he has taken care to give us very sufficient and ample proof. Either therefore he did not in reality apprehend this danger, or else was willing, whatever might be the consequence, to *shake the whole*. Some, on the other hand, may really apprehend the danger, and on this account be somewhat disgusted at the liberty assumed in the following *Notes* of controverting some popular opinions. The author however is, for his own part, firmly persuaded, that religion has a much deeper foundation than either education or civil authority; an everlasting foundation in reason, truth and nature. He therefore concludes, that no harm can arise to religion itself from the utmost freedom

ADVERTISEMENT. vii

dom of inquiry ; and being of no party at all he has no ends to answer by the suppression of it. Nay he thinks, that the friends of religion among all parties cannot do it a better service, than by heartily encouraging this free and unreserved discussion of every thing relating to it, and that it will never appear among us in its dignity and perfection, in its enlivening force, in its glorious, immortal fruits, till this encouragement be duly given. For which reason he cannot conceive how any one can be more dishonorably employed, than in addressing himself after the manner, in which it is here done, to the public, not for the sake of recommending his own principles and opinions, but the principles of others, the opinions, which happen to be in general vogue and esteem, whatever they may be, and how pernicious soever to every religious, moral and civil interest.

E R.

ERRATA.

PAGE 3. line 8. *for interrupted read interrupted.* p. 4. l. 8. *for certainly read certainly.* *ibid.* l. 9. *for p. 24 read p. 243.* p. 22. l. 10. *for p. 280. read p. 281.* p. 37. *dele the two first lines and transfer them to the top of page 41.* p. 38. l. 24. *after known read to.* p. 51. l. 6. *after have read been.* p. 58. l. 33. *after talk of read a.* p. 84 *for ject read subject.* p. 93. l. 11. *after again read he.* p. 112. *after all instead of the full stop put a semi-colon.* p. 153. l. 23, 24. *the words are introduced should be in the small letter.* p. 162. *read the ninth line before the eighth.* p. 170. l. 13. *for from read share.* p. 173. l. 3. *dele the full stop after pure and put a comma.* *Ibid.* l. 34. *dele the comma after evidence.* p. 175. l. 12. *after amends read are.* p. 185. l. 28 and 29. *to be marked as a quotation.*

The Reader is likewise desired to make the two following amendments:
p. 10. line 21. *after thinking beings; add, the former being the destruction only of one particular source or medium of happiness, the other of the very capacity for enjoying any happiness at all,* p. 154. l. 1, 2. *dele by some national test.*



N O T E S

ON THE

Philosophical WRITINGS

OF

Lord *BOLINGBROKE*.

P A R T I.



THE principal design of these *Notes* is to animadvert upon such *passages*, as may seem to affect the credibility of the scripture-history, the truth and authority of the gospel, the grounds of religious and moral obligations, their supreme excellency, and infinite importance. But as Lord Bolingbroke has long had the reputation of a very elegant and spirited writer, to which on many accounts he has an undoubted claim, it is proposed to introduce some incidental remarks upon his style, language, and composition. General reflections upon the scope and tendency of his writings, the temper with which he has treated the subjects before him, and the use that may be made of this

A

revived

revived scheme of scepticism and infidelity, will more conveniently follow the *Notes*, as it is by their evidence, that the propriety of such reflections must be decided. This only, I would here observe, that the manner in which I have proposed to animadvert upon these *letters*, *essays*, and *fragments*, has been naturally suggested to me, by his Lordship's manner of writing. He himself has told us, at the end of his *second essay*, vol. iv. p. 173. that

Regular treatises and complete systems *are not to be expected from him.* -

And indeed he by no means attempts to *argue*, either *regularly* or *irregularly*, so often as the various subjects of such high importance, and one way or another decisive, which he has undertaken to treat of, justly demanded. Sometimes indeed, you would imagine him to be entering with the greatest deliberation, upon the full discussion of some interesting and momentous point; but, instead of proceeding in the argument, he falls into a violent fit of raving against *philosophers and divines, metaphysicians, pythagoricians, platonicians, stoicians, and others.* He often indeed recurs, when these transports are over, to some former subject; but it is often too with the same superficialness as before, and very frequently, instead of throwing any new light upon it, he makes it, if possible, still darker than before, by a fresh cloud of pompous, but unmeaning words. His Lordship likewise, is so fond of displaying, upon every occasion, his exact and extensive learning, as tempts one to believe, that he often starts his subject, rather for the sake of shewing how much he has read about it, than how well he could reason upon it. It is to this, I suppose, we may impute it, that he so frequently introduces very solemn and labored dissertations, upon subjects altogether trifling, trite, and insignificant. Besides all this, we are ever and anon, in the course of these *treatises* and *essays*, reminded once more

more of those stale objections, which it is somewhat irksome to hear of, but would be still more so, to take into formal consideration, not because they cannot be answered, but because they have been already so effectually refuted. The old story of interpolations, spurious gospels, sham miracles, thirty thousand various readings, and the like, is resumed, and with great industry and humility, retailed by his Lordship. In short, the vague, declamatory, interrupted and broken method, in which he has chosen to convey his sentiments, has subjected him to endless and very tedious repetitions. For these, and other reasons of the like nature, that might have been assigned, it is presumed, that some justice may be done to these *treatises* of the noble, or as we might more truly say, of the *lordly* writer, by criticising upon them, in the manner we have proposed. We begin according to the order and series of the *volumes* with the substance of some letters to M. de Pouilly.

P. 183. vol. iii. You led me first in my retreat to abstract philosophical reasonings: and though it be late to begin them at forty years of age, when the mind has not been accustomed to them earlier, &c.

This last clause is, I believe, one of the most inexcusable tautologies, that can easily be met with. For what one idea is there suggested by this "line," *when the mind, &c.* which was not expressed in the single preceding word, *begin*?

P. 190. From refuting his opinions, I was led to advance one of my own, and to assert that this fact, "*the world had a beginning*," is a fact founded on such a tradition, as no reasonable man can refuse to accept.

The tradition that the world had a beginning, has usually been considered as the tradition of an *opinion*. But Lord Bolingbroke proposes in this *essay*, to consider it as the tradition of a *fact*, of which there were competent witnesses. In order to support this notion, he is obliged to have recourse to an hypothesis purely *arbitrary*, and to suppose that *men* were created before *animals*, and so might be witnesses to their production. And as he supposes that they would thus *know certainly*, that the animal world *began*, so he asks, (p. 24.) with respect to these *first* men,

Could they doubt that they were such?

It seems possible that they might, unless we suppose them to have been witnesses of their own creation. So that for all that I can see, the tradition that the world had a *beginning* must still be considered, not as the tradition of a *fact* attested by those men, who had been actual, immediate witnesses of it, and from thence transmitted to the whole human race, but only of an *opinion* so generally prevailing, in every age and in every country, as in the strongest manner to intimate, that no conception can be more natural to the human mind than that of a first intelligent cause, the Creator and Author of all other beings whatsoever.

P. 208. Sanchoniathon — a lover and follower of truth—learned and curious in searching the original of things.

Lord Bolingbroke never read Sanchoniathon: his history has been long since lost: upon what authority then does he give him this high encomium? upon that of Eusebius; of whom, on all other occasions, in order to depreciate the credibility of the Mosaic history, he speaks with the utmost contempt. But for what reason, or with what consistency,

istency, his Lordship can have so much dependance upon the authority of Eusebius, for the character of Sanchoniathon, and so little for that of Moses, let the candid and impartial reader determine.

P. 219. The Chinese—have traditions and records of immense antiquity, and very singular authenticity.

This assertion will, I suppose, be looked upon as a very *singular* proof, either of the amazing power of prejudice, or of the most deliberate and wilful partiality : for, by what means did his Lordship come to have any knowledge of these *traditions and records* ; why, by the information of the jesuits ? See vol. iv. p. 208. His Lordship has taken no slight or trifling pains to convince us, that he pays no regard to the Jewish history, because the Jewish scribes were (as he tells us, vol. iii. p. 205.) *a lying race*. Admitting his assertion in the fullest extent, can it be less applicable to the jesuits ? Why then so remarkable a preference given to their attestations ?

P. 233. It is impossible to read what he (*the author of the book of Genesis*) writ on this subject (*the creation of the world*) without feeling contempt for him as a philosopher, and horror as a divine ; for he is to be considered under both these characters.

Lord Bolingbroke well knew, that there have been many, who, being as fully persuaded of the truth of the Copernican system as himself, have believed the account, which Moses gives of the creation of the world, to be perfectly consistent with that system. They have thought that there is not the least appearance of his designing to exhibit any

representation of the production of the great universe, but only of our earth, or, at most, of our planetary system. They have supposed too, that the process of six days, which Moses there describes, was not intended to express any operative employment, or successive labours of the Deity, but only the different forms, in which this our earth or planetary system must have appeared, during its gradual advance, under the directing and efficacious influence of the creating Deity, towards its present state. It is true, that, in order to justify these suppositions, it is to be presumed, that the account here given is not to be looked upon as strictly literal, but more properly as an allegorical representation. But is not allegory allowed to have been a very ancient method of writing? is it not still thought to be, in many respects, a useful and entertaining one? On what occasion is it more likely that it should have been used, than in giving an account of the origin and creation of things? Has not this very subject been treated of by other ancient writers, in the very same manner? And is it more improbably supposed, that Moses should have chose this method of asserting and pointing out the creation of the world, than other writers, whom we allow actually to have done it? But to interpret an allegory literally, is as great an absurdity, as to interpret history allegorically.

The *puerility* therefore which his Lordship, upon this occasion, ascribes to Moses, is not chargeable upon the allegorizer, but upon his absurd interpreter. And after all, can it be in the least degree surprizing, if in an allegory so ancient, there should be some particulars, for which we cannot very exactly account? But how consistent soever this representation may be, with true philosophy, we cannot, it is said, read it without *feeling horror for Moses as a divine*. I believe, whoever reviews it with any tolerable attention, will find that the two great truths there asserted, concerning the Deity, are such as must be very far from exciting *horror*. For they are these, that he made the world by his
power

power, and that he made it with perfect wisdom and goodness. The former is contained in this plain and clear assertion; "in the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth;" the latter in that short, but expressive remark, with which every distinct period is closed, "and God saw that it was good;" and that most beautiful, and still more expressive conclusion of the whole; "and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." In short, Longinus, whose judgment we may safely venture to put in balance with his Lordship's, was so far from reading Moses's account of the creation, either with contempt or with horror; that with a particular reference to that very account, he speaks of him as *a most extraordinary man*, and as one who *entertained worthy and honourable conceptions of the supreme Divinity*. Longin. de Sublim. sect. ix. p. 28.

We go on to a letter occasioned by one of Archbishop Tillotson's sermons.

P. 263. The negative argument (*i. e. against the eternity of the world*) "we have no memorials beyond such a time," proves nothing but our ignorance.

This argument has long been thought very convincing: and, I presume, it cannot be invalidated by his Lordship's observation. For, had the world been eternal, nothing can be more natural than to suppose, that, for many thousands of years beyond the actual commencement of history, we must have had *memorials and records* altogether as well authenticated, and containing transactions, as copious and as interesting, as any of our most valuable remains of antiquity; and that many of these would have been as familiar to the minds of the curious and inquisitive, as any of those that are now become so. Whatever allowances it may be thought proper to make for the ruins and devastations, that

might have happened in these preceding periods, by which many valuable records might have perished, must we not believe likewise that some would have remained; as we find this to have been actually the case, notwithstanding the like ruins and devastations that have happened since the supposed commencement of the world. Nothing can be more agreeable to such a supposition, than the real condition and known state of history. As it can be traced only through a few thousands of years, so its first memorials are very scanty and abridged, containing but a small number of particulars, and these, for the most part, not greatly illustrious, or highly interesting. Nor could it possibly be otherwise, supposing the world to have been, at the time to which these memorials refer, in its infant state. For the infant world could no more afford materials for a large and copious history equal to those it would naturally furnish in its rising and mature age, than the infancy of a single man which is so soon passed over in the story of his life, how great and eminent soever may have been his fame and actions in the succeeding scenes of it.

P. 268. The atheist objects that these motives (*that determined the supreme Being to create the world*) must have been eternal, since the divine attributes from which they are deduced are certainly eternal in the system of the divine, and that it is impossible therefore to conceive, that the supreme Being should neglect doing, during an eternity, what it was conformable to his wisdom and goodness, and suitable to his power from all eternity to do.

It is readily granted, that nothing can be more incongruous, or self-contradictory, than to suppose that eternal
goodness,

goodness, wisdom, and power, should have been eternally inactive, and without effect. For, let us imagine any particular period, at which the supreme Being commenced Creator. Could we suppose him to do this, without supposing some motive, by which he was determined then to create? But whatever motive we assign, that motive must have subsisted from all eternity, since it could possibly have no other source than his own eternal perfections; and, consequently, for the same reason, that we believe him to have exerted his creating power at that particular period, we must believe him to have exerted it sooner, and for the same reason, that we believe him to have exerted it at this remoter period, we must believe him to have exerted it from all eternity. But it by no means follows from hence, that this particular world, or system of ours, was created from all eternity. On the contrary, as the divine perfections are eternal, so they are unchangeable, and cannot suffer the least diminution or decay. We must therefore conclude, not only that the Deity has exerted his creating power from all eternity, but also that he continues to exert it, without intermission. Nor can there be any greater appearance of impropriety, in supposing that the supreme Being will, throughout the endless ages of eternity, create new systems of being, than there is in believing, as we do, that he will for ever preserve and continue in existence those rational creatures, both men and superior intelligences, that now exist. Unless indeed we could imagine the one to be a more difficult effort of divine power than the other, which cannot surely be apprehended. But now, in this uninterrupted and eternal progress of creation, some system of being must have been produced at the very period we suppose ours to have been created, whatever date we may think proper to assign for the beginning of it. What therefore the atheist is here supposed to object, when applied to creation in general, and not to the production of this or that
parti-

particular system of being, must, undoubtedly, be admitted not as an objection, but as a truth. And this is the solution which his Lordship advances in the following pages, though somewhat darkly and confusedly, and with this additional query, p. 270.

Why should not the universe *be maintained* in being, by a constant rotation of worlds, or systems of worlds, from existence to non-existence, or from generation to dissolution, *as he says*, our world and the inhabitants of it are maintained in being.

With respect to which I would only observe, that the corruptions and dissolutions, which take place in this world of ours, are only so many different forms or modifications of matter, under any one of which it is as really and truly existing as before. And though we suppose that the time will come, when this material world shall finally, and for ever perish; yet no argument can possibly be drawn from the destruction of mere unconscious matter, to the supposition of any similar destruction, or of the annihilation of intelligent and thinking beings.

P. 271, 2. It was the pride of the Jews to believe themselves, and to make others, if they could, believe, not only that their nation was the elect people of God, but that it was of an immense antiquity, and that they possessed the most ancient of all authentic records.

This observation is plainly intended to pass for an argument against the authenticity of the Jewish history. But if it really be so, it is likewise an argument against the authenticity

Writings of Lord Bolingbroke. 11

thenticity of all history whatsoever. For Lord Bolingbroke himself had before observed in this very letter, p. 261. that

Men have been always fond, not only to carry the originals of their several nations as far back as they could, and to represent them, sometimes as coæval with the world itself, but to establish their own, or the traditions which had come to them, as the most ancient of all traditions.

And he instances particularly, p. 262, in the *Romans*, *Greeks*, and *Chinese*. And if the Jews supposed themselves to be in a peculiar manner the favorites of heaven, and looked upon themselves as the elect people of God, is it not the common partiality of every nation or people in the world to give themselves the preference to every other nation or people? Was not this notoriously the case both among the Greeks and Romans? And is it not so among the Chinese at this day? But does his Lordship allow, that this is a circumstance sufficient to discredit their annals, or fit to be alleged as a reason for rejecting their history?

P. 275. That Moses was not a cotemporary author is allowed, and that he could have no cotemporary authority for the greatest part of what he advanced concerning the creation is proved.

Previously to this passage his Lordship had observed, that *in order to constitute the authenticity of a history, it is one necessary condition, that it be writ by a cotemporary author, or by one who had cotemporary materials in his hands.* That
Moses

Moses was not as to some parts of his history a cotemporary author, is indeed allowed, as it is in the case of a great multitude of historians besides, of all who have not confined themselves to the history of their own times. And as to the *first and most ancient historian*, whoever we suppose him to have been, he could not be a cotemporary author, unless we suppose the first men who ever existed wrote the history of their own lives. But Lord Bolingbroke speaks of it as a great absurdity, p. 250. vol. iii. to

suppose that there were philosophers, as soon as there were men.

And I imagine it is not less absurd to suppose, that there were "historians as soon as there were men." It is allowed likewise, that a history not writ by a cotemporary author, in order to its being credited, must be composed by one, who has cotemporary materials in his hands. But then it is to be remembered that, whatever history we look upon to be the most ancient, the materials of that history could only be transmitted by tradition. And if, as Lord Bolingbroke supposes, the tradition of the fact, that the world had a beginning, might with so much certainty be transmitted, why not the tradition of subsequent facts, till the time at which history commenced? Most persons will, I believe, be inclined to think, that the first men might be much more competent witnesses of what they did, and heard, and saw, after they were created, than they could be of their creation itself. Or if his Lordship imagined that men might from the very first have accustomed themselves to make some brief memorials of what passed amongst them, was it not incumbent upon him to have proved, that it was not so likely that Moses should have these materials in his hands, as it was that some other historian should be possessed of them? Ought he not to have fixed upon some other historian for the first and most ancient, and to have proved it more likely that

that he should have been possessed of these materials, than it is that Moses should have had them in his hands?

P. 275. Were they (the writings of Moses) published among people able to judge of them and their author?

Most evidently they were. For could not *the people amongst whom they were published*, be able to know, whether they had ever before heard of any such things as were there related. As to what they had before heard of, could they not tell whether it was and had been in their own nation, and by persons of every rank and condition, and every degree of knowledge, generally believed as true? And as to those particulars that might appear new to them, were they not able, some at least amongst them, to judge whether Moses had any probable means of coming to the knowledge of these things? And as to himself, could they not know whether he was a man of competent understanding and competent integrity? Never was there any people in the world so blind and stupid, as not to have numbers amongst them, who were able to judge of such matters as these, in relation to their own history.

Ibid. A book, to be deemed authentic, must have been received as such in the age which followed immediately the publication of it, and in all the ages which followed this.

That a book to be deemed authentic, must have been received as such in the age which followed immediately the publication of it, is undoubtedly true, because if it be not received, as such, in that age, it cannot be received as such in any succeeding age; since the only reason why it is not then received, as such must

must be because it is then known to be spurious. So that the latter part of this remark seems to be superfluous. For if a book, known to be spurious in the age immediately after the publication of it, be transmitted at all to succeeding ages, it must be transmitted as spurious, and not as authentic. And thus we are easily furnished with an answer to his Lordship's subsequent question.

Ibid. Has it been sufficiently proved, that the Mosaic history was so received, (*i. e. as authentic*) in the age which followed immediately the publication of it?

Its being received as such in the succeeding ages *sufficiently proves* it, because that could not possibly have been the case, if it had not been received as such in the age immediately following the publication of it.

P. 276. When they (*the Jews*) had actually no body of law extant amongst them.

This refers to what we find recorded in 2 Kings, ch. xxii. concerning a book of the law, which after having been for some time lost, (how long does not, I think, appear) was at length found in the temple by Hilkiah the priest, in the reign of Josiah. Lord Bolingbroke, it seems, as well as some others, would have it believed; that during the time this book was lost, there was absolutely no copy of the law extant among the Jews. Yet we find it to have been very particularly enjoined upon the Israelites by Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, ch. vi. ver. 7, 8, 9. that they should "diligently" study the law and "teach it to their children." The command is peculiarly express and solemn, and is as follows: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently,

"ly,

“ly, unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou
“fittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the
“way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up.”
Now is it to be imagined, that this precept, when first in-
culcated and inserted in the body of their law by the legi-
slator himself, should not have introduced it as a custom
among great numbers of the Jews to have the book of the
law in their families? Must not this custom have been
transmitted from one generation to another, and have be-
come fully established? Is it therefore at all likely, that
when the particular book spoken of in the passage referred
to was lost, there was absolutely no other copy of the law
amongst the people? Is it not far more probable, that there
were many? It is true, that the loss of the particular book
belonging to the temple, was a sign of very great degener-
acy prevailing, both among the priests and the courtiers.
And this sufficiently accounts for the solemn manner, in
which, upon finding this particular copy, the book of the
law was publicly read. It was taking a very natural occa-
sion to remind them of the gross and shameful neglect they
had been guilty of with relation to it, and of recommend-
ing it to their future regard. And if this be a just account
of the matter, all that his Lordship has suggested about the
probability of introducing *forged and fictitious history*, whilst
this book of the law was lost, must be entirely without
foundation. And whatever it be, that he would have
us to infer from that Mosaical appointment, which he
more than once takes occasion to mention, for a solemn
reading of the law publicly, and to all the people once in
seven years, to wit, at the time of general release; this is
certain, that it can afford no sort of ground for admitting the
probability of *forgery and corruption* in the present penta-
teuch. For the appointment to read it once every seven
years in that solemn manner, does not in the least imply,
that it was not to be read at other times. And the law just
now cited from the book of Deuteronomy, carries in it
the

the plainest and most express injunction for reading it much oftner.

P. 277. Was there not time more than enough between Moses and David to make fabulous traditions pass for authentic history?

Without all doubt *more than enough*, if we only suppose all the Jews that were born between the time of Moses and that of David to have been cast from their infancy into a most profound sleep, and thus to have passed the remainder of their days. When his Lordship immediately subjoins,

Did it take up near so much (*time*) to establish the divine authority of the alcoran among the Arabs, &c;

he is guilty of a palpable sophism, and alters entirely the state of the question; for he is here professedly treating, not of the divine authority of the Mosaic institution, but of the authenticity of the Old Testament history, upon the footing of human credibility, as sufficiently appears from the following passage.

P. 279. Another condition of the authenticity of any human history, and such alone we are to consider in this place, is, that it contain nothing repugnant to the experience of mankind. Things repugnant to this experience are to be found in many that pass, however, for authentic; in that of Livy for instance: but then these incredible anecdotes stand by themselves, as it were, and the history may go on without

without them. But this is not the case of the pentateuch or the other books of the Old Testament. Incredible anecdotes are not mentioned seldom or occasionally in them. The whole history is founded on such, it consists of little else, and if it were not an history of them, it would be an history of nothing.

Again, page 280.

Two or three incredible anecdotes in a decade of Livy, are easily passed over; I reject them, and I return with my author into the known course of human affairs, where I find many things extraordinary, but none incredible. I cannot do this in reading the history of the Old Testament. It is founded in incredibility. Almost every event contained in it, is incredible in its causes or consequences, and I must accept or reject the whole, as I said just now.

It will no doubt be expected, that to these bold and confident affirmations, some direct and formal answer should be returned, and yet it is scarce possible to do this without falling into such an enumeration of particulars, as upon any other occasion would be thought extremely trifling. However, as his Lordship has made it necessary, it is hoped that this will be admitted as an ample excuse. I venture to assert then, in direct contradiction to his Lordship, that the *history of the Old Testament*, as to the main part of it, is not *founded in incredibility*; that *almost every event contained in it is not incredible in its causes or consequences*; and that, if those passages, to which his Lordship may be

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presumed

presumed to refer, when he speaks of those *incredible anecdotes*, of which, he says, and *little else it consists* were wholly excluded, it would still be a *history of something*. But I would not venture to do this, if I had not my proof at hand, which Lord Bolingbroke either had not or did not chuse to produce, when he advanced the fore-going affirmations. The proof I mean is that, which will arise from a comparison of the Old Testament history with every other history whatsoever; by which it will undeniably appear, that the main series of events recorded in this history, are of the same general nature with those, which are recorded in all other histories, and that therefore there can be no reasonable pretence for saying, as is said, p. 280, that in reading it we are

Transported into a sort of fairy-land, where every thing is done by magic and enchantment.

Now what is it that we do meet with, or that we expect to meet with in reading the history of any nation or people? One thing we very naturally look for, and that is, that the several members of such a national community, or the individuals of such a people, both high and low, rich and poor, marry, and are given in marriage, have children born to them, die, and leave these their children to be their successors upon the stage of life. And if his Lordship had but recollected the first chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, which contains an epitome of the Jewish history, so far as relates to matters of this sort, during a very long period, he would have found that this was the *known course* of affairs among the Jews, as well as in all other nations of the world. And we may suppose, that he would have been very well able to account for the *causes and the consequences* of these things among them, as well as among other people, without having recourse to *magic or enchantment*. So like-

likewise, if this people arose from small beginnings to be a numerous and flourishing body politic, is not this too according to the *known course of human affairs*?

Do we ever meet with any national history, which does not give the same general account of the origin and increase of the people, whose story it relates, and their formation into a distinct or national body, as is given by Moses concerning the origin, rise, and establishment of the Jewish people? Are there not various events, some prosperous, some afflictive concurring to such a distinct, national establishment in a manner similar to what we find to, have been the case in the history of other nations? If they quarrelled with the neighbouring states and nations, was it not thus among the states of Greece and the ancient states of Italy? If they settled themselves in Palestine by the success of their arms, did not the Romans in the same manner become the possessors and masters of Italy? If they had a law-giver of their own, had not the Athenians their Solon, Sparta her Lycurgus, and Rome her Numa? If their form of government underwent frequent changes and revolutions, had not Rome her kings, her consuls and her emperors in succession, as well as the Jews their seventy elders, their judges and their kings? If they had peculiar rites and customs of their own, is not this true of every other nation under heaven? Or must the land of Judea be considered as a *land of fairies*, merely because it had not in ancient times the same rites and usages to which his Lordship had been accustomed in the reign of Queen Anne? For the same reason it ought so to be considered now. If in the course of the Jewish history we read of whoredoms, adulteries, machinations, combinations, assassinations, massacres, rebellions, treasons, victories, national prosperity, and national calamity, kings dethroned and others exalted in their room, are not these the chief subjects of every history that has been wrote? These and other events of the like kind, I again affirm, to be the principal and constituent

parts of the Old Testament history, as they are of all other histories whatsoever. And one would think it impossible for any one who had ever read it with any understanding and attention, not to know that they were so. And if amidst relations and narratives of this kind, his Lordship now and then met with an anecdote that he thought incredible, could he not have done as he did in Livy, have *passed it over and returned with his author into the known course of human affairs?* Nay, ought he not to have done this, if he would have been thought consistent and impartial? Might it not have been said of these things, that *they stand by themselves, as it were?* And would not *the history have gone on without them?* Or if amidst that general concurrence and harmony with all other histories, of which we have been taking so brief and summary a view, there are some circumstances in the Jewish history that distinguish the people, of whom it treats, from all other people in the world, is not this rather a mark of its credibility than otherwise? For has not every nation its peculiar and characteristical complexion? And is it not the business and one of the principal perfections of history to delineate and point it out?

P. 281. The next condition of historical authenticity is this, that the facts, the principal facts at least, be confirmed by collateral testimony. By collateral testimony, I mean, the testimony of those, who had no common interest of country, of religion, or of profession, to disguise and falsify the truth.

Every country has a common interest, and, generally speaking, a common religion. But how this common interest

terest and common religion can be any inducement to the general community to disguise or falsify the main series of their own history, it will be found perhaps not very easy to imagine. That persons of particular professions, persons subject to particular prejudices, and writing with particular views, have this inducement in particular instances, is indeed by fact and experience sufficiently known. But whenever this party-spirit prompts to such a procedure, it is the interest of impartial men to detect the imposture. Or if it should be asked, where are such men to be found; the opposite party will at least make it their business to do this. And I believe it will be very readily allowed me, with respect to all other national histories, that the *common interest and the common religion* of the nation, on the one hand, and the parties, or factions, which are and have been more or less prevalent in every nation, on the other, are, as it were, our joint-security for the faithfulness and credibility of their records. But if his Lordship's very extraordinary caution, in admitting collateral evidences, be received into the canons of historical criticism, those, who relate the history of their own country, must for the future be considered, contrary to what has hitherto been the general apprehension of mankind, as historians, that are of all others the least to be credited, that is, supposing that credit is to be given to any. Tho', in reality, if we allow such a caution to be necessary, then is all historical credibility at once and effectually overthrown. For as according to this rule, those who relate the history of their own country, deserve so little to be regarded, since those who write the history of a foreign country, must necessarily derive their materials from the annals and records of that very country itself, and from the accounts that have been previously given by those who have belonged to it, their histories will for the same general reason, as little deserve that any credit should be given to them. Besides, if the common interest

and common religion of a people be sufficient to invalidate the credibility of what is related by their own historians, surely the interest of a single man, and his religion, if he has any, must likewise be a sufficient reason for our rejecting all that he may relate concerning any transactions, in which he himself may have been engaged. So that if Lord Bolingbroke had wrote his own political history, we could not, according to this maxim, have had the least dependence upon the truth of it.

P. 280. But it is not enough, that the same facts are related in cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary, books ; since, if the authors of these books were such as I describe, all these testimonies would be, in effect, but one, as all those of the Old Testament, which confirm the Mosai-cal history, are, in truth, but one, the testimony of Moses himself.

If his Lordship had not expressly founded this observation upon the reason assigned in the fore-cited passage, we might have imagined it to have proceeded from that childish fancy, that all the books of the bible, because they are bound up together, must needs have been wrote by one single author. So far, however, as this remark depends upon the preceding one, enough has been already said in reply to it. And if, independently of that, any additional reason can be assigned for considering the testimony of those other authors, whose writings are contained in the Old Testament, and confirm the *Mosai-cal history*, as coinciding with the testimony of Moses himself, it can only be, because they believed his history to be true. And thus it would be impossible for any historian, to have any testimony given to his history

history but his own. In short, every authentic history, has one general source of credibility, from which all the regard paid to it, either when first published, or in succeeding times, must necessarily be derived. This is no other than the character of the historian, compared with the opportunity he had of being properly informed. But must all therefore, who receive this or that particular history, as authentic, be considered only as one witness to its credibility, and not rather as so many different witnesses, attesting one and the same truth?

P. 283. The truth is, that ignorance and superstition, pride, injustice and barbarity were the peculiar characteristics of this people (*i. e. the Jews.*)

Admitting this to be the truth, will this at all invalidate the credibility of their history? And yet with this design apparently, or with none at all, is this observation introduced. Ought not ignorance, superstition, pride, injustice, and barbarity, if they really do constitute the character of a nation, to be recorded in the history of that nation? And may they not, as well as other things, be authentically recorded? There are few genuine histories of public and national affairs in which we are not furnished with numerous instances of the like follies and vices. Tacitus, in particular, relates the most horrid and enormous instances of cruelty in the character both of Tiberius and of Nero. But did Lord Bolingbroke esteem his history to be on that account in any degree the less authentic?

Ibid. Thus much is certain, that the same spirit breathes through the whole (*Jewish history*)

story) and that the character of the nation appears evidently in every part of the composition.

Here his Lordship in his too eager haste to vilify the Old Testament history, has unluckily fallen upon one very strong mark of its credibility. For such the consistency of a history with itself must ever be deemed. For want of this many specious narratives have been at length detected of palpable forgery; and it is plainly one indispensable criterion of historical truth. By which, however, is not to be understood an absolute sameness of representation in every minute particular and circumstantial occurrence, but only an agreeing and harmonious view of all the principal facts and leading characters and an uniformity of moral complexion, genius or disposition in the people or the persons whose affairs it relates.

P. 284. Thus we see that the authenticity of the Mosaical history, and the other histories of the Old Testament, has no sufficient collateral testimony.

Truly, as his Lordship has managed the matter, it neither has nor can have any *sufficient testimony* of that kind. For as to Josephus, his full and ample testimony is rejected, on account of his being an *interested witness*, and all the collateral evidences he has produced, rejected likewise, purely for having *passed thro' his hands*: Eusebius, and the ancient testimonies alleged by him, have the same fate. And as for those foreign, or heathen writers, whom his Lordship says he calls *collateral witnesses*, and to whom it might have been imagined some greater respect would have been paid, as not being at all liable to the exceptions urged against the former,

former, these likewise are passed over in haste, nor is any one of them so much as mentioned upon this occasion. And the whole of what his Lordship allows in express terms, with relation to their testimony, is, (p. 282.) that by it we have it

proved, that the Israelites had a leader and a legislator called Moses, and that *they* were an Egyptian colony and conquered Palestine.

All besides he has thought proper to conceal under a few phrases of doubtful and indeterminate meaning, which contributing nothing to the illustration of the subject, serve only to expose the artifice and sophistry of the writer. To supply, in some measure, this very material defect, let it here be noted, that Strabo, *whose authority*, Lord Bolingbroke observes, upon another occasion, (p. 214. vol. iii.) *of all the ancient writers, is perhaps of the greatest weight*, that Strabo, I say, has expressly recorded it of Moses, — That he publicly declared against the idolatry of the Ægyptians, Libyans and Greeks; asserting, that there was but one God, the Creator of heaven, earth and sea, of the world itself, and of the intire system of nature; and that it was the highest presumption and madness to think of representing this supreme Divinity by any visible images; that he persuaded many to be of this opinion, and resolved upon establishing amongst his followers a religious worship, from which the use of images should be absolutely excluded. Vid. Strabo, lib. xvi. as quoted by Grotius de veritat. lib. i. § 16. p. 65. These are circumstances that most exactly agree with the doctrines and institutions ascribed to Moses in the history of the Old Testament; and they do at the same time exhibit his character in so honorable a light, as cannot but give the highest sanction to his credibility as an historian. It is remarkable likewise, that Justin, besides that

that he speaks of Moses as the conductor of the Israelites out of Ægypt, has distinctly inserted in his history the following particulars: the malice and envy of Joseph's brethren against him, his being sold by them to foreign merchants, his being carried into Ægypt, the friendly reception he met with in the Ægyptian court, his great sagacity, his prudent administration of public affairs during his residence in that court, and the happy success of it in the preservation of Ægypt from famine; the wisdom and learning of Moses, and even the beauty and comeliness of his person; the return of the Ægyptians from the pursuit of the Israelites, being compelled to it by storms and tempests; the arrival of the Israelites at Mount Sinai, their passage through the deserts of Arabia, and the hardships they underwent in it; the institution of their sabbath, and their having a religious discipline established by Moses, and differing from that of all other nations in the world. In these several particulars he agrees entirely with Moses; and it is to be remembered, that as Justin's history is only an abridgement of a much larger work, nothing can be more reasonable or natural, than to suppose, that in the original history of Trogus, many other particulars of the same kind would have occurred, had it been transmitted to our times. Vid. Justin, lib. xxxvi. c. 2.

Many particulars also are to be met with in the account, which Tacitus has given of the Jews, very exactly corresponding to the scriptural and Mosaical history, such as their journey through the wilderness under the conduct of Moses; the great extremities which in that journey they were driven to for want of water, and their being at length supplied with it by Moses, not without some mention of the rock spoken of upon this occasion in the book of Exodus; their having religious rites established amongst them by Moses contrary to those of all other nations; their abstaining from swines flesh, their frequent

quent fasts, their unleavened bread, their keeping the seventh day as a day of rest, their sabbatical year, their use of circumcision, their belief of one, supreme, eternal, immutable and immortal Deity, and their total exclusion of images from their religious worship. Vid. Tacit. hist. lib. v. sub init. And if in some other particulars these historians differ from Moses, the difference is sometimes so small and inconsiderable, and the resemblance in the main still so apparent, as that even these particulars may rather, and much more justly be urged as instances of their agreeing with him than of their contradicting him. Thus for example, Justin makes Jacob, or Israel, as he calls him, to have ten sons instead of twelve; and Joseph to be the youngest, instead of the youngest but one, and Aaron to be Moses's son, instead of his brother. Nor can it require any great stretch of fancy to discern a very strong affinity between those plagues of Egypt, which, according to Moses, preceded the departure of the Israelites out of that country, and that infectious leprosy of the Jews, which according to Justin and Tacitus, was the occasion of their being driven from thence; especially as, according to Justin this distemper invaded the Egyptians as well as the Jews, which is likewise, I think, manifestly the sense of Tacitus. And if, after all, in relating these and other particulars they sometimes differ from Moses widely, totally and irreconcilably, is it at all to be wondered at, that in this as well as in so many other known instances, such difference there should be between the native and the foreign historian, without prejudice however to the general credibility or authenticity of either? In short, nothing can be more evident, upon an impartial view, than that there is in heathen writers as fair and ample a testimony given to the general authenticity of the Jewish history as can in reason be demanded; and where must we go for particulars, but to the Jews themselves?

P. 289. Moses did not believe the immortality of the soul, nor the rewards and punishments of another life.

The reason given for this assertion is, that he taught neither. And that Lord Bolingbroke should be fond to speak of the law of Moses as not declaring the doctrine of a future state, can be no way surprising. For though, according to his own opinion upon the subject, he could not himself on that account dislike it the more, yet he might naturally enough apprehend it to be an objection, that would carry in it a plausible appearance to those who still retained so much relish for their own existence, as not to think very contentedly of parting with it at their death. But that any christian divine should insist upon the same, may be thought somewhat inconsistent, when it is remembered, that our blessed Saviour has so expressly imputed this notion to downright ignorance. "Ye do err," says he, addressing himself to those who denied a future state, "not knowing the scriptures," i. e. the law of Moses, "nor the power of God." And indeed nothing can be more evident, than that the passage which he refers to upon this occasion, tho' it does not in formal words declare the doctrine of a future state, does manifestly suppose it to be an undoubted truth. For what man in his senses would ever have called God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who had been so long departed out of this world, if he had not believed them to have been existing in another? Could any man that had, or that pretended to have the least reverence for God, ever have entertained the thought of calling him the God of non-entities, or of mere dust? To this passage we might add another of the like kind out of the same pentateuch. For, I believe, it must be very difficult for any one to imagine, what Jacob could mean, when he said upon his death bed, "I have waited for thy salvation,

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tion, O Lord;" if he did not refer to that future state, in the hope of which he had spent his days, and upon which he believed himself to be then making his entrance. And that the belief of a future state was a firm, established belief among the Jews, is farther evident from what David says upon occasion of the death of his child; "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He plainly comforts himself with the thought, that he should go to his child. But what comfort could there be in believing, that his child was annihilated, and that he himself was soon to be abandoned by his maker and reduced to the same fate? And when he asserts in one of his psalms, that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," what can he be thought to mean but this, that some happy and important distinction would be made at death in favor of the good and virtuous? But where can be the possibility of this, if they and the wicked are at that period equally doomed to non-existence? And that in the opinion of Tacitus at least the doctrine of a future state was the prevailing and popular belief of the Jews, is evident from his expressly asserting, that their belief upon this article was the same with that of the Egyptians,—*eadem de infernis persuasio*—and from his ascribing their earnest desire of posterity and their contempt of death to that belief. *Animasque prælio aut suppliciis peremtorum æternas putant. Hinc generandi amor & moriendi contemptus. Tacit. hist. lib. v. sub init.*

P. 290.—But the first principles and the whole tenor of Jewish laws took them (*the Jews*) out of all moral obligations to the rest of mankind.

Let this remark be confronted by a citation or two from the original system of these laws. Exod. xxii. 21.
Thou

“ Thou shalt neither vex a *stranger* nor oppress him:
 “ for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Levit.
 “ xix. 33, 4. And if a *stranger* sojourn with thee in
 “ your land, ye shall not vex him. But the *stran-*
 “ *ger* who dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one
 “ born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thy-
 “ self, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.
 “ Deut. x. 17, 18, 19. For the Lord your God is
 “ God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a
 “ mighty and a terrible, who regardeth not persons,
 “ nor taketh a reward. He doth execute the judgment
 “ of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger
 “ in giving him food and raiment. Love ye there-
 “ fore the *stranger*, for ye were strangers in the land
 “ of Egypt.” It is impossible that these precepts should
 refer only to profelytes from Gentilism, because in that
 case the reason by which they are enforced, “ for ye
 were strangers in the land of Egypt,” would be nothing
 at all to the purpose; unless we were to suppose, con-
 trary to the whole tenor of the Mosaical history, that
 the Israelites who sojourned in Egypt, became profelytes
 to the religion of that country. Other passages of the
 same kind might easily have been produced, but it is
 presumed that these will be abundantly sufficient utter-
 ly to invalidate his Lordship’s observation.

P. 291. But can there be any thing so im-
 piously interested and craving as the sentiments
 ascribed to the patriarchs by Moses?

Jacob’s vow is the instance alleged in support of this keen
 interrogatory. “ If God will be with me and keep me
 “ in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and
 “ raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s
 “ house

“house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” Now what does this imply, but that, if God should in the course of his providence, give him success in the particular design he was then pursuing, he would ever consider it as a strong and powerful motive to his pious gratitude, without the least intimation, that, if this should not be the case, he would disown the providence of God, or withdraw his allegiance from his Creator and sovereign Lord? So that we have only to ask in our turn; can any thing be more *disinterested*, or more remote from a *craving* and mercenary disposition, than an ingenuous and fervent gratitude?

Ibid. If we turn to the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, we shall find, that Moses, on the renewal of the covenant between God and the people, employs no arguments to induce the latter to a strict observation of it, of a higher nature than promises of immediate (i. e. temporal) good, and threatnings of immediate (i. e. temporal) evil.

These, *ibid.* and p. 292, are represented as objects of ambition, avarice, and of all their other appetites and passions,

i. e. as is plainly here intended, of the vicious kind. Thus are the motives to virtue arising from its happy consequences, with relation to temporal prosperity, both personal and national, and the directly contrary effects of vice, disparaged and contemned. In justice, however, to his Lordship, it must be owned, that this is done only to serve the
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the present purpose, and that he himself can upon other occasions admit arguments very similar to these, as being highly necessary and convenient, and as being perfectly conformable to the real scheme of providence. For he tells us, vol. 3. p. 412, 3. that

legislators and the founders of commonwealths, and all those who have civilized and instructed mankind, have been careful to observe the behavior and the dealings of men with one another, in the same and in different societies. They have remarked the circumstances and the consequences of every action, relatively to the happiness and unhappiness of mankind.

These he calls *the natural sanctions of rewards and punishments*, and speaks of it as a prudent, wise, and laudable practice in these legislators, &c. to have pointed them out distinctly, *in order to promote the practice of virtue and to restrain vice*. So that the very same arguments, which, when urged by Moses, serve only to exhibit *objects of ambition, avarice, and of every other (evil) appetite and passion*, are, when pointed out by other legislators, *civilizing, instructing*, and in the highest degree useful and beneficial. It is on account of these arguments that Moses is censured, p. 292. for representing the Deity as *purchasing obedience by a mercenary bargain*. And yet, if Moses has justly incurred that censure, Lord Bolingbroke himself must needs be equally liable to the same. For thus he writes, vol. v. p. 494, 5.

Tho' it be apparent that the immediate regard of providence is directed to men collectively, not individually, yet the divine wisdom has found

found means to punish individuals, by directing men to form societies and to establish laws; in the execution of which, civil magistrates are in some sort the vicegerents of Providence. To them distributive justice is committed, and when this fails to have its effect, when the immorality of individuals becomes that of a whole society, then the judgments of God follow: and, as men are regarded collectively, they are punished collectively in the order of a general providence. This is evidently the oeconomy of God's government of mankind in this life.

We stay not now to enquire into the propriety of the sentiments contained in this passage. For that we may have another opportunity, and the use we would make of it here is sufficiently obvious.

P. 293. We cannot read the bible without being convinced, that no law ever operated so weak and so uncertain an effect as the law of Moses did.

How far this observation may be strictly true, it is needless to examine, and would, perhaps, to the candid and impartial enquirer, be extremely difficult to decide. But let it just be hinted, that if the violations and infractions of their own peculiar law, of which the Jews were confessedly and notoriously guilty, are admitted as a valid objection to the utility of that law, the objection must needs be of equal force against that *law of nature*, of which Lord Bolingbroke speaks, page 307. vol. 3. and there, as

well as in many other passages, asserts to be the *law of God*.

P. 298. There are gross defects and palpable falsehoods in almost every page of the scriptures,

i. e. of the Old Testament, as we chuse here to interpret the expression, agreeably to the connection and the subject treated on; tho' perhaps his Lordship would have had little or no objection to our extending the meaning of it still further. Be that as it will, we cannot help observing, that, if Lord Bolingbroke had been much solicitous about *consistency* of writing, he would either not have expressed himself so strongly here, or else have omitted what he tells us in the page following; that

There are many passages in Job, in Isaiah, in the Psalms, and in other parts of the Old Testament, which give most sublime ideas of the majesty of the supreme Being.

As to the general assertion itself, we have seen, in some measure, upon what particulars it is founded. As a farther illustration of it, the account given us of the fall in the book of Genesis, is alleged, p. 302. His Lordship is pleased to tell us, that the *allegorical* interpretation of that account *cannot be admitted by Christians*, and that *the whole must be understood literally*. The reason he gives for this, is;

For what would become (*if it was interpreted allegorically*,) of that famous text, whereon the doctrine of our redemption is founded?

He has not thought proper to specify that *famous text*, nor need we give ourselves the trouble to ascertain it, tho' this perhaps would be no difficult matter; since it is sufficiently

ciently apparent, that the true reason, why Christians are not permitted by his Lordship, to make use of this allegorical interpretation of the account, which Moses has given of the fall (tho' some of them nevertheless have presumed to take that liberty) is, that then there would be no room left for him or others to make a jest of it. For he expressly allows (*ibid*): that it

may not seem improbable that this allegory *might be* invented — to signify the introduction of physical and moral evil into the world;

Tho' he thinks proper to give the honor of the invention, if it be admitted, to the Egyptians. Neither has his Lordship forgot, upon this occasion, to object the destruction of the Canaanites. The *fact*, however he himself has paralleled, (p. 305.) from other histories, and by that means sufficiently answered the *objection*. For certainly such a destruction executed by the Jews, cannot be more inconsistent with the perfect order and oeconomy of the divine providence, than the like destruction executed by any other nation. But were it even supposed, that this destruction had been executed by some special commission from heaven, and that those who were the instruments of it had been animated to the work by some miraculous impulse of the Deity upon their minds, and that it had amounted to an absolute extermination, yet is there no man, who could have so little pretence as Lord Bolingbroke to object against it. And that for these two reasons. In the first place, there is nothing, which he so much or so earnestly insists upon, as that it is the height of presumption and arrogance for men to think of being able to judge of the motives of the divine conduct, to determine what is agreeable, or otherwise, to the divine perfections, or even to imagine, that justice and goodness mean the same thing, when applied to God, as when applied to man. For any thing therefore that his

Lordship could, upon his own principles, allege to the contrary, such an extraordinary commission and miraculous impulse as we have just been speaking of, might be perfectly consistent with both. Secondly, it appears to have been his Lordship's belief, or at least what he was very desirous of believing, that the whole human race will at death be finally and for ever exterminated by an absolute annihilation. And what can be more ridiculous than for one entertaining this opinion, or desirous to entertain it, to pretend any difficulty in reconciling the slaughter only of a small part of the human race in the present world, without any bar to their existence in a future state, to the perfection of the supreme Deity, by whatever method it may have been effected? What his Lordship has advanced in support of these opinions, we propose, in the progress of these *Notes*, freely to examine. And

We come now to "essay the first, concerning the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge."

P. 356. We talk, indeed, of the eternal ideas of the divine mind, and allude to our manner of knowing, that we may understand ourselves and be understood by others the better, just as we are forced very often to employ corporeal images, when we speak of the operations of our own minds. But these expressions, so much abused by those who are in the delirium of metaphysical theology, have no intention of being understood in a literal sense among men who preserve their reason.

The delirium of theology and the madness of philosophers are phrases, which, together with many others of the like sort, so very frequently occur in these pieces, that I persuade myself

the world, and of all intelligent and rational natures, there will be a variety of inferences directly and certainly deduced, no calm or sober by-stander of Epheſus could have been more ſtunned with the clamors of that noiſy mob, who for three hours together had nothing elſe to ſay but, “ Great is Diana of the Epheſians,” than every reader of Lord Bolingbroke’s writings muſt be with his inceſſant repetition of “ Great is the madneſs of philoſophers, great is the delirium of divines, and great is my anger and my zeal againſt them. An elegant and chearful raillery, diverſified by lively turns of wit and humor, is far from being diſagreeable to a man of judgment, taſte and candor, even tho’ it be leveled againſt his own opinions. But dull inveſtive is of all dullneſs the dulleſt. And yet Lord Bolingbroke ſo much abounds in this, that were we to extract only from theſe pompous volumes all thoſe ſtrokes of raillery, which have neither wit nor humor, neither common decency, nor common ſenſe to recommend them, leaving at the ſame time thoſe which have any apparent pretenſions of this ſort in full and undiſturbed poſſeſſion, their bulk would be very conſiderably diminiſhed, and conſequently their price. But diſmiſſing once for all the elegancies of this kind ſo profuſely ſcattered throughout theſe writings, let us attend to a very extraordinary diſcovery hinted at in this paſſage, of which his Lordſhip ſeems to have been not a little fond ; as it muſt indeed be owned to be the pure, undoubted offſpring of his own invention. It is, *that the divine knowledge is without ideas.* To this purpoſe he obſerves, vol. v. p. 37. that

The paſt, the preſent, and the future, as we conceive them, are known alike to the ſupreme Being not by the perception, *any more than by*

the retention or the anticipation of ideas, but in a manner inconceivable by us.

He immediately adds,

For there is, I think, a plain fallacy in this expression, that the immediate object of knowledge being called an idea, we may say that God knows an object, that he knows an idea.

But where lies the fallacy? Why in this, that the Greek word, from which the term *idea* is derived, signifies both to *see* and to *know*; from whence his Lordship very ingeniously and shrewdly infers, that as we cannot apply the *sense* of seeing to God, so neither *ideas*. He tells us, however, in the very same page, that

God may have a knowledge which prevents even thought, *as well as the sense* of seeing.

And to sum up his sentiments upon this head, he informs, us, *ibid.* that

A knowledge of things as they are, and a knowledge of the ideas of them, are extremely different, as different as immediate and reflected light, as absolute and relative knowledge. Every thing we know is known to us in the second manner, nothing in the first; every thing is known God in the first, and he has no need of knowing any thing in the second.

The plain man, whom his Lordship sometimes introduces in opposition to the philosopher, the metaphysician and the divine, would be tempted perhaps to say upon this
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occasion, that *knowledge without ideas*, is altogether as great an absurdity as motion without mobility, or as sight where there is nothing to be seen. But in deference to his Lordship, we will content ourselves with observing, that this must at least pass for as profound a *mystery*, as has ever yet been advanced, either by *Jewish cabalist*, *Platonic philosopher*, or *Christian theologian*. It is true, that human knowledge is acquired by the *help* and *intervention* of ideas; terms, which his Lordship frequently makes use of in treating upon this subject; and that these terms cannot with any propriety be applied to the divine knowledge. It is true likewise, as he observes, that God does not *combine* ideas, vide vol. 5. Fragment ii. p. 36 and 38. But does this prove, that the divine knowledge is *without ideas*? It proves no more than that instead of being adventitious, progressive, or in any degree, or in any sense whatsoever, the effect of a laborious acquisition, it is essential to the divine nature, intuitive and immediate, and that it has been from all eternity compleat and absolute.

P. 356. Our knowledge is so dependent on our own system, that a great part of it would not be knowledge, perhaps, but error in any other.

So again he tells us, p. 382.

That human knowledge is relative not absolute;

And once more, p. 557, 8. speaking in the person of the *plain man*,

That how short and imperfect soever the knowledge acquired by observation of the phaenomena might be, he was contented with it, because it was

knowledge acquired in God's way, that is, in the only way God has opened to our enquiries concerning the nature of things corporeal or spiritual ; nay further, that if he could suspect himself to be deceived in this way, he would be contented still ; he would conclude on this, (*i. e. the subject of the immateriality and immortality of the soul*) and other occasions, that whether things appear to him as they are absolutely, and such as the supreme intelligence knows them to be or not, they appear to him such as it is fit for his nature, that they should appear to him.

If these maxims are admitted, I see not that there can be any such thing as sound or real knowledge subsisting amongst mankind : all *is* precarious and uncertain ; all *may be* false and delusive. They seem indeed to contain the principles of universal scepticism. However, it will, I suppose, still pass amongst the generality of mankind for an *absolute* certainty, for a *real* and not a merely *relative* truth, that in this world of ours there are passions, affections, opinions, volitions, actions, motions, connections, dissolutions, events, producing with wonderful uniformity, regularity and order, a vast and immense variety of effects, thus amounting in all to one grand effect. I suppose too, that it will be admitted in general for a thing equally certain, that such a grand effect, such a conspiring tendency to a common good, appearing through so wide and amazing an extent of being, must needs have some adequate and proportionate cause, which can be no other than an intelligent Creator of the highest wisdom, power and goodness. And when once such a Being is acknowledged as the Creator of the

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cible ; containing conclusions which cannot be false or erroneous, if these premises be true, and comprehending in their result and issue all the fundamental principles and well known maxims of religion and morality. To make use upon this occasion of an obvious example ; would not Lord Bolingbroke have been very justly surprized, if any one should have alleged to him, that it was not *absolutely*, but only *relatively* true, that he wrote these essays, fragments, &c. and that, notwithstanding what such creatures as we might apprehend, it might nevertheless be an error. Or would his surprize have been less, if upon the supposition, that they were certainly the productions of his pen, it should have been alleged, that possibly we might be mistaken in considering them as the effect of a discerning and intelligent mind ? If therefore it must be allowed to pass for an *absolute, certain vnd immutable* truth, that reason, understanding, and a mind are necessary, in order to the writing a few rambling and inconsistent essays, we can never at the same time admit a maxim, the unavoidable consequence of which, though far from being owned by his Lordship, is, that possibly we may be mistaken in ascribing the beautiful world, and the great, harmonious universe of Being, to a mind infinitely superior to all human intelligence.

P. 374. The true fact, I think, is this ; that as soon as men ceased to range the woods and plains in common, like their fellow-animals, if they ever did so ; as soon as societies were formed, and in those societies a division of property was made, nature that led them to assign, led them to ascertain possessions.

This is one of those numerous passages, in which his Lordship discovers a very vehement desire of ranking himself

self and the rest of the human species in the class of *mere animals*. Thus he tells us, p. 379, that

if the system (*of this world*) was not made for us, we at least were made for the system, and for the part we bear among terrestrial animals,

So again, p. 417.

In a word, the boasted power of framing complex ideas and abstract notions will be found, as it is exercised, to be so far from shewing the great force and extent of human intellect, and from raising man up to divinity, that it will shew on the contrary, how weak and how confined this intellect is, and sink him down, if you will allow me such an expression, into that animality above which he affects so vainly to rise.

To the same purpose he tells us, p. 442.

Since knowledge has encreased, their own knowledge and that of other men, philosophers and divines have been forced to moderate their pretensions. They have fallen a little in the value they had set on human intellect; and I suspect, or rather I would hope, that they must fall a good deal more, how unwilling soever they may be to part with that tinsel, which has passed so long for gold and silver.

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How sincere he was in expressing this his glorious hope, and how fond of indulging it, will appear from the following very extraordinary passage, to be found in page 422, 3.

I persuade myself (*says he, addressing himself to Mr. Pope*) that you have been more than once ready to laugh or cry in the midst of several rational creatures, who talked of things quite different, called them by the same names, and imagined that they talked of the same things. The choirs of birds, who whistle and sing, or scream at one another, or the herds of beasts who bleat and lowe, or chatter, and roar at one another, have just as much meaning, and communicate it just as well; at least I presume so, for I can affirm of no species but my own. All of them seem to have ideas, and these seem often to be better determined in the birds and beasts than in men. All of them seem to have in these loud conversations, some general meaning. But none of them seem to have that precision, order and connection of ideas and notions, which can alone make up rational discourse. Such is the common conversation, such the ordinary correspondence of men with one another; such too for the most part are all the public discourses that are held, and the solemn harangues of the pulpit.

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Thus are we poor rationals degraded for no other reason, but because we now and then happen to mistake one another's meaning. This at least is the only reason his Lordship has thought proper here to assign. But I forbear particular remarks. They would, I think, upon this occasion, be impertinent. These are Lord Bolingbroke's words; I refer them to the censure of the reader.

P. 379. They have meaned, *instead of* they have *meant*.

So in p. 371.

if I meaned; p. 376, we learned; p. 430, I have dwelled the longer; p. 539, Des Cartes sweeped away all these souls, (*i. e. of brutes*) at once, and the objection with them,

And p. 32, vol. v.

Heathen divines builded their theology not only on physical but on moral philosophy.

In all which instances the full, original words, *meaned*, *learned*, *dwelled*, *sweeped*, *builded*, are made use of, instead of the contractions, *meant*, *learnt*, *dwelt*, *swept*, *built*. And I think, that in other instances of the like nature the example might be followed to the advantage of our language.

P. 429. Moral ideas and notions therefore, of which no such copies (*visible*) can be made, which are held together in the mind with the names assigned to them, by nothing but the retentive power of the mind, and which can
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be signified by nothing but sounds that bear no resemblance to them, must fluctuate and vary, beget all the confusion, spread all the obscurity, and give occasion to all the fraud I have mentioned.

This seems to be an observation thrown out at a venture, in order to promote the author's general design of disparaging human science, and debasing human nature, without much sollicitude, whether any reason could be assigned for it or not. For what single appearance is there in nature, from whence we might be led to infer that *moral*, more than any other ideas, *are held together by nothing but the retentive power of the mind*? Are men less shocked at vice or less disposed to the practice of virtue merely for having a bad memory? Are they more averse to the one, or more inclined to the other, merely for having a good one? Is it possible for us, in short, to form a judgment in the least degree, either of a man's moral temper, or of the proficiency he has made in moral studies particularly, by being told what sort of a memory he has, whether good or bad? Of the same kind is a farther observation made by his Lordship in the same page.

Intellect, (*says he*) the artificer, works lamely without his proper instrument, sense, which is the case when he works on moral ideas.

That sense is not the instrument, by which we frame our moral ideas is very certain. But if we may have any dependance upon what Lord Bolingbroke himself has elsewhere asserted, it by no means follows from hence, that they must on this account be so extremely lame and imperfect as he would here persuade us to believe. For he tells us, p. 448, (and nothing could have been more justly said) that

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To assert that there is no other source of ideas but sensation, is to assert something most evidently false; for to explain what has been touched already, or hinted at least, we have as determinate and as clear ideas of thought, as of extension or solidity; of our inward faculties, of their operations, and of the modes of thinking, as of the powers, the actions, and the modifications of mere body.

If this be the case, we have only to suppose, and surely it can be no unreasonable postulatam, and is indeed sufficiently owned by his Lordship, when he excludes sense from having any employment in the affair, that our moral ideas depend upon our *inward faculties and powers* and upon their operations, in order very easily to conceive how we may *work upon* them to some very valuable purposes, without the aid or instrumentality of sense. Be it here likewise observed, that upon many other occasions we find his Lordship speaking far more honorably of the moral science than in the passages which have just been cited. Thus he expressly prefers it to natural philosophy, when he tells us, p. 405, that

There is no study, after that of morality, which deserves the application of the human mind, so much as that of natural philosophy, and of the arts and sciences, which serve to promote it. The will of God, in the constitution of our moral system, is the object of one. His infinite wisdom and power, that are manifested in the natural system of the universe, are the

the object of the other. One is the immediate concern of every man, and lies therefore within the reach of every man : the other does so too as far as our immediate wants require, and far enough to excite awe and veneration of a supreme Being in every attentive mind.

So again, vol. v. p. 40, 41.

When we have reasoned a posteriori from the works to the will of God, from the constitution of the system, wherein we are placed by him, to our interest and duty in it, we shall have laid the foundations of morality upon a rock.

Thus too in the same volume, p. 51, he tells us,

That this very law, (*the law of nature*) is enacted in all the works of God, promulgated in terms the most proportionable to human conception, and writ in characters so plain, that he who runs may read them ; and, *that* the great principles of moral truth are as much founded in the nature of things as those of mathematical truth.

At p. 244 of the same volume, he likewise very strongly pleads the cause of morality against superstition ; observing with the greatest propriety, that in the ancient heathen world,

Two great mischiefs arose. Religion became form and ceremony, and the observation of forms

forms and ceremonies of greater moment than the practice of moral duties, tho' the practice of these was recommended too.

He speaks of it also, *ibid.* as a thing equally mischievous in the church of Rome, that

Tho' no one can say, that she allows men to cheat and to rob one another; on the contrary, she requires that men should be just in all their dealings,—yet absolution for fraud or theft will be obtained from the priest, who cannot give it for eating a slice of meat on the vigil of some saint.

These are very useful observations, and highly worthy of being attended to by those who officiate in the public exercises of religion. For it can be to very little purpose, that in these the principles of morality are owned, while other things that tend directly to divert mens regards from them are chiefly and with the greatest zeal insisted upon. I say, owned, because it is too apparent, that in those schemes of doctrine so widely differing from the pure and genuine system of Christianity, by which the greatest part of our public instructions are modeled and directed, the principles of morality are rather acknowledged than contended for, rather granted as principles that cannot be denied, than inculcated as principles that ought never to be forgot.

P. 429. That the first and great principles of natural religion may be demonstrated, and that ingenuous minds may be trained to make a just application of them in some particular cases, I
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acknowledge. But that the precise meaning of moral words can be so fixed and maintained, that the congruity or incongruity of the ideas and notions they stand for shall be always discerned, clearly and uniformly, I do not believe.

The general purport of this passage will perhaps be illustrated by what we meet with in the second essay, vol. iv. p. 7.

We have a very superficial acquaintance with man. Do we hope to become better acquainted with God? One would imagine that metaphysical divines did really entertain this hope—They assume it (the human mind) to be near akin to the divine, something derived immediately from God, and capable of being united to him. An intellectual mirror it is that reflects from the phaenomena of nature alone some very few notices of the supreme Being, beyond the demonstrative knowledge that we have of his existence.

So likewise, p. 70, 1. *ibid.* his Lordship remarks upon an observation made by Bishop Wilkins, namely, “ That religion, and not reason in the general, is the form of human nature, because there are some degrees of ratiocination discernible in the brute creation, and such a natural sagacity, as at least bears a near resemblance to reason.” He tells us that this

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Will not serve the Bishop's purpose, nor evince that reason, as it is determined to actions of religion, is the particular form of human nature. It will prove at most that some men have, and that no other species of animals has in general, nor in particular instances, the faculty we call reason in such a degree, as to render them capable of discovering the existence of a supreme Being, and the duties of natural religion. I said some men, because even among the creatures that are all commonly, but perhaps erroneously, comprehended in this species, on account of their outward form, there are stupid savages, of whom it seems lawful to doubt, whether they are able to make greater discoveries, concerning God and religion, than the half-reasoning elephant.

That the discoveries of many of those whom we call savages, *concerning God and religion*, are but very superficial, in comparison of those which have been made by many whom we deem polite and civilized, and even by other savages, if that must needs be the appellation, is indeed very apparent. Yet I believe there are no savage people who do not appear to have some knowledge of God ; and I believe there never was an elephant so wise as to have any. But were we to admit instances of an actual equality in this respect between a savage and an elephant, yet total inattention is one thing, total incapacity another. The one is an invincible impediment to knowledge, the other not. And in all such instances there would be this obvious and decisive difference remaining, that in the savage there would

would be a possibility of acquiring the knowledge of God, but not in the animal. The elephant is absolutely at his *ne plus ultra*, but not the savage. And had any one placed a young savage and a young elephant under his Lordship's tuition, in order to their being initiated in the principles of the "first philosophy," I suppose he might very soon have convinced which had the best capacity for profiting by his instructions.

How well the depreciating man's natural capacity for the knowledge of God, as is done in these passages, to which others of the like sort might have been added, is adapted to some main principles of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophical system, may in part be seen already, and will more fully appear, as we proceed in these remarks. Yet to prevent any present misapprehensions, let them be compared with these that follow, selected likewise from many others of the same kind, vol. iv. p. 70.

God never left himself without a witness, which witness is the whole system of his works, tho' human reason must be cultivated to discover this as well as other truths.—All truth requires some search, and many are to be acquired by labor; but there is no one that requires less labor than this, as there is no one that deserves or rewards our search so well. Thus I think, and in thinking thus, I adore the goodness of the supreme Being.

To the same purpose, *ibid.* p. 194.

The impressions of the Creator are so strongly marked in the whole extent of the creation, and the idea of an all-wise and all-powerful
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Being, first cause of all things, is so proportionable to human reason, that it must have been received into the minds of men as soon as they began to contemplate the face of nature, and to exercise their reasons in such contemplations.

For which reason, *ibid.* p. 240. he calls

the existence of one supreme, self-existent Being, the first intelligent cause of all things, — a bright and luminous truth.

Thus again, *vol. v.* p. 66.

God appears in his works and by easy deductions from our knowlege of them, to be the first self-existent intelligent cause of things, a Being of an infinite wisdom and power, and therefore an object to all rational creatures, not of curiosity, but of awe, of reverence, of adoration, of gratitude, of obedience and resignation.

And once more, p. 415, 16. *ibid.* he speaks of it, as what would be

absurd *as well as* impious, both to assert with Epicurus, that the world was made by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and that as it was made so, it is governed by chance, without any knowlege, without any rule, without any providence.

P. 451.

P. 451. Ordinary men may be content to make the most of the commerce they find established in their nature between sense and intellect, to push their inquiries about mind as far, and no farther, than a few general notions, which intuitive observation will justify, and in this process, and in the communication of their intellectual ideas, to avail themselves of corporeal ideas, and to make the little they know of body subservient to the less that they can know of mind. This is enough, no doubt, for vulgar souls confined to material habitations, wherein they feel the weight of an heavy atmosphere, and the malignity of an easterly blast. But it is not enough for those who are raised above the vulgar, metaphysicians by nature, divines by grace, &c.

That we can know but very little of mind in comparison of what we may know of body is a favorite maxim with Lord Bolingbroke. But it is a maxim purely arbitrary and apparently false. Every man's own mind is his nearest object. And if he knows but little of it, it is not for want of ability but of attention. And of other minds it is manifest that there is a great variety of knowledge subsisting in the world. What is all that knowledge which we call experience, prudence, foresight, but the knowledge of our own and others minds? What are all national histories and the lives of particular persons that have ever been written, but the history of mind? For surely the history of human actions and affairs must be the history of human minds.

The schemes of politicians, the systems of moralists and divines, and even the discoveries of the natural philosopher, what are they but so many effects of the mind?

P. 508. That we live and move and think according to some human modes of thinking, and that there must be something in the constitution of our system of being beyond the known properties of matter to produce such phaenomena as these, are undeniable truths. But here certainty ends. What that something is we know not, and surely it is time we should be convinced that we cannot know it.

To the same purpose, p. 510.

Mr. Locke takes much pains to shew that the notion of spirit involves no more difficulty or obscurity in it than that of body, and yet I think I can make him prove the contrary for me.

How he does this we shall consider anon. In the mean time I will take upon me to justify Mr. Locke's observation; and I will *make* Lord Bolingbroke *prove for me* the truth of of it. He observes, p. 508. that

Philosophers *may* know *something* very superficially of solid extended substance.

In this and in other passages he considers, as most others do, a solid, extended substance, as being the definition of matter. Now I say that of a thinking substance, which is
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the true definition of spirit, we may form as clear and determinate an idea as we can have of a solid, extended substance, which is the generally received definition of matter, For the word *substance* must certainly be as intelligible in the one definition as in the other. If therefore there be any peculiar difficulty in conceiving of a thinking substance, the difficulty must arise from the word *thinking* and not from the word *substance*; unless his Lordship intended so poorly to play the sophist, as to quibble upon a common use of this latter, according to which it denotes only such portions of matter as are hard and weighty. But who will pretend to say, that we cannot have as clear an idea of thinking as we have of solidity or extension? or where is the man to be found, that has not actually as clear an idea of that as of these? Lord Bolingbroke, however, expressly asserts, in a passage that has been already quoted (vol. iii. p. 448.) that

we have as determinate and as clear ideas of thought, as of extension or solidity;

And again, p. 427, that

The idea we have of thought by reflection, is as clear as that we have of extension by sensation.

And from hence I say it certainly and undeniably follows, that we may have as clear an idea of a thinking substance, as of a solid extended substance, that is, we may have as clear an idea of spirit, as we can have of matter. And indeed his Lordship himself upon other occasions makes use of such expressions as seem plainly to prove that he was at least able to form such an idea, how unwilling soever he might be at other times to confess that he was so. For thus, p. 506, speaking of spirit, tho' he says indeed, that

we can have no idea of it, yet he adds in the very next words, *which is known only by consciousness*. Can any thing be more clearly or certainly known, than that which is known by consciousness? Or is there any thing, of which it would be more absurd to affirm, that we have *no idea*?

So again, p. 524.

We have clear and determinate ideas of what we call body by sensation, and of what we call spirit by reflection, or to avoid cavil as much as may be, without giving up common sense; we have such ideas, by sensation, as the various powers of that substance, called body, are ordained to produce in us; and we have such ideas by reflection, as the inward operations of that which we call spirit, be it substance or faculty, excite in us.

Again, p. 530. speaking of the *sensitive soul*, he says,

They, who maintain (that hypothesis) suppose it to be a middle being between body and spirit, or they do not. If they suppose it so, they suppose it to be neither extended nor unextended, neither material nor immaterial, and we have no idea of any other substance.

By saying in this connection, *we have no idea of any other substance*, he seems tacitly and unwarily to intimate, that of both these we have, or at least, that it is very possible we may have, ideas. Besides, his Lordship frequently asserts, that *God is not matter or a system of matter*

ter or a material Being. Vid. p. 504 and p. 555, and vol. iv. p. 483, and elsewhere.

From hence it necessarily follows, according to the preceding quotation, that his Lordship must believe God to be a spirit, for *we have no idea of any other substance.* And indeed, p. 427, he does in express terms, and very justly, call God a spirit.

All spirits, (*he there says*) are hypothetical, except the infinite spirit, the Father of spirits, the supreme Being.

We meddle not with the glaring contradiction contained in these few words, of saying that *all spirits are hypothetical except the infinite spirit*, and yet calling *the infinite spirit the Father of spirits.* Nor will we undertake to reconcile what he says, p. 555.

God is not a system of matter, but he is not therefore a spirit such as we conceive spirits to be,

with what he had said in a preceding passage just now cited, that we have no *idea of any other substance*, but *material and immaterial.* All that we mean to observe is, that Lord Bolingbroke, by constantly denying God to be matter, plainly proves, that he could well enough form the idea of a thinking being or substance, that is not matter. There can therefore be no impropriety arising merely from any obscurity or unintelligibleness in the general term or idea, in saying of the human soul, that it is a spirit or a thinking substance. His Lordship indeed tells us, p. 509, that he does *not pretend to deny the possible existence of spiritual Beings.* But yet in the person of the plain man, he says, p. 527, that *he cannot draw any other conclusion from them* (the phaenomena) than this, *that all animal systems* (in which

which he includes the human) *are material*. Upon the whole, the farthest he allows himself to go upon this subject, is to vindicate and justify, as well as he can, that hypothesis, which maintains, that, though thinking cannot possibly result from any properties of matter, yet the faculty of thinking may be super-added to certain systems of matter. See p. 513, 519. This hypothesis, if I am not mistaken, involves in it the most manifest absurdity and contradiction. For it allows, that thought is *something beyond the known properties of matter*, as Lord Bolingbroke directly asserts it to be in a passage already cited from p. 508. Nay, it is an hypothesis expressly designed to account for thinking upon the supposition, that it cannot possibly be accounted for by the mere powers of matter, and at the same time to avoid the supposed difficulty of ascribing it to a distinct spiritual substance. Now, I say, that this faculty of thinking said to be super-added to matter, must be either itself a substance distinct from matter, or it must be the property of some other substance that is so. And thus we must necessarily suppose in man some really existing principle of thought wholly different from matter and from all its properties. In a word, I think every one by reflecting a little upon this hypothesis may discern, that, if it has any meaning at all, it must be supposed either to admit a distinct, thinking principle, being, or substance, or else to resolve all thinking into the powers of matter alone, both which it is intended to evade. Nay, if, as this hypothesis seems directly to admit, thinking be no more the natural property of matter, according to all the ideas that we can possibly form of it, than solidity is of spirit, according to all the ideas we can possibly form of that; if this, I say, be the case, it must, I think, be altogether as absurd to talk of faculty of thinking, super-added to matter, as it would be to talk of a faculty of solidity super-added to spirit. But we are told

P. 509. *That* if nothing, which is an object of real knowlege, could be opposed to the immateriality and immortality of this substance (*the human soul*) the insuperable difficulty of accounting for the action of mind on body, and of body on mind, that are reciprocally and in their turns both active and passive, would stop all our philosophical inquiries.

With reference to the action of mind on body, however difficult it may be for us to explain it, and this is readily acknowledged not to be a difficulty, but an absolute impossibility, yet the reality of the thing itself must necessarily be admitted by all, who suppose the exertion of a divine power in the support and preservation of a material system, and at the same time believe God not to be a material being. For this is directly the action of mind upon body. And if any powers at all are communicated to creatures, bearing in the general nature and idea of them some imperfect analogy to divine power, as every degree of real power in created beings necessarily must, why not this power of acting by mind upon body, as well as others in certain limited degrees? Neither is there any one maxim so fully established by the phaenomena, to which Lord Bolingbroke professes so strict an adherence in all his philosophical inquiries, than that thought is the principle of motion. It is indeed absolutely impossible to conceive, that there should ever have been such a thing as motion, if there had never been such a thing as thought. And on the other hand, nothing can be more contrary to the phaenomena, than the ascribing active principles to particles of matter, which yet his Lordship seems desirous of doing. For he tells us, p. 525.

Whether many of these original particles (*of matter,*)

matter,) may not be endowed with active principles, such, for instance, as cause fermentation, in some, and cohesion, in all bodies, is a point, that none of them (*the proudest dogmatists*) can determine.

Tho' upon other occasions he expresses himself with more propriety. He tells us, (p. 517, note) that *without thinking the body would be unable to begin motion*. And p. 502, he speaks of *motion* as what *men* know *consciously to be the effect of thought*. It is to be observed likewise, with relation both to the action of mind on body and the action, or rather the influence of body on mind, that whatever difficulty there may be in accounting for them, it cannot be removed by the hypothesis of a faculty of thinking superadded to matter. For this faculty is by the very terms of the hypothesis allowed not to be a property of matter itself, but to be something distinct from it. And it must, I think, be as truly a difficulty to conceive how a faculty of thinking (could we form the idea of any such faculty separate from some thinking substance) and matter, which is not thinking, should have any reciprocal influence upon each other, as to conceive how a distinct, thinking substance, and matter, can have any such reciprocal influence. The difficulty, if it must needs be called such, is in both cases of the same general nature. So that if the hypothesis of a distinct, thinking substance be on all other accounts the most rational and probable, it cannot on account of this difficulty be at all the less so. Farther still, with respect particularly to the influence of the body upon the mind, and those *clogs, impediments, and incumbrances*, to which the mind is said to be subjected in consequence of its union with the body; it is to be remembered, that those who still contend for this distinction of mind and body, will have it to allege, that all these clogs, impediments, and incumbrances, do, as such, and under that distinct notion, actually subsist in the mind itself, and not in

in matter, or in any thing foreign or exterior to the mind. They are in reality its own sensations, ideas and perceptions, as much as any of its rational and most sublime contemplations. Thus what we call bodily pain, does not, as will be readily admitted, exist in the body, but is an idea or sensation of the mind. And if this particular idea or object of the mind does at times exclude other ideas, and prevent the mind's attention to other objects, so does the mind's attention to other objects often prevent the idea of pain, to which it would otherwise be undoubtedly sensible. Thus, men are frequently observed, thro' the influence of excessive fear, or in the ardor of compassion exerting itself in behalf of some distressed friend or neighbor, to go through those bodily fatigues and hardships, with little or no sensibility of them, by which, at other times, they would have been totally overwhelmed. Thus too the soldier in the heat of battle feels not those wounds, which at other times would make him roar for anguish. And if bodily sensations sometimes prevent the attention of the mind to objects of a higher nature, to intellectual or moral ideas, so does one species of intellectual or moral ideas made the subject of particular and intense meditation, of course exclude from the mind other ideas of the same general nature. But what does all this amount to in the one case or in the other more than to a proof of the mind's imperfection, its limited capacity, and its inability to be conversant with a different set of ideas at one and the same time: which may be the imperfection of many other rational beings, tho' of a superior class, as well as of man. I say in the one case as well as in the other. For the idea of pain is as truly an idea or a perception of the mind, as any of our rational or moral sentiments.

The power of thinking, (*as Lord Bolingbroke very justly observes, p. 531.*) is as necessary to the perception of the slightest sensation, as it is to geometrical reasoning.

From

From which observation it necessarily and directly follows, that our being subject to bodily sensations, whether pleasurable or painful, is no more inconsistent with the nature of the mind, considered as a distinct, thinking substance, than any of our most abstract, philosophical speculations. The former are indeed ideas of an inferior kind, but still they are as truly the effect of a thinking faculty, wherever that faculty is supposed to reside, as the latter. From hence too it follows, that the various incumbrances spoken of are not properly incumbrances to thinking, but only to this or that particular mode of thinking. The sick man knows, to his sorrow, that sickness does not suspend or in the least impair the power of thinking; but, on the contrary, that it is in sickness as fully employed, as when he is engaged in his counting-house, in his study, or in his fields, though not in a manner so agreeable or entertaining. Madness, an instance specified by Lord Bolingbroke, p. 516. *note*, is so far from being an instance of any defect or loss of thought, or consequently of any failure in the thinking power or faculty of the mind, that it is indeed in the very nature of it such an excess of thought upon one particular subject, as prevents the attention of the mind to any other. When we recover from a deliquium, or fainting fit, which is another instance mentioned by Lord Bolingbroke, p. 516, *note*, we find, that our minds have been under some very powerful oppression. But could mere insensibility or want of thought thus oppress and overwhelm the mind? On the other hand, may not such an effect be more naturally imputed to the violent incumbency of some particular idea, either of pain, or sickness, or astonishment, or fear or hope, or sorrow, or joy; by one or other of which fainting is known to be generally occasioned? And if so, the deliquium itself may be considered as a kind of stupor, in which it may be rather said, that we are lost in thought, than that we have lost the power of thinking. It cannot, however, be certain,

tain, that we cease to think during the interval of a fainting fit, merely because we have no remembrance of thinking in that interval, when we recover from it; since, as we shall have occasion presently to observe, we may give the most evident tokens of thinking in sleep, even tho' we ourselves may not have the least remembrance of it, when we come to awake. In short, it will, I suppose, be admitted without scruple, that even the mind of an idiot is perpetually conversant with ideas, at least whilst he is awake, tho' they be of an inferior nature. So that even in him thought is not abated, or the power of thinking diminished, any more than in the philosopher himself, but only one particular mode of it, suspended; for which, however, in most instances of this sort, there are appearances of a dormant capacity, to be exerted whenever the present obstruction shall be removed.

P. 511. These notions (*i. e. of the primary and secondary qualities of body*) I have taken from Mr. Locke, and they lead me to ask, what the primary ideas are of spirit or immaterial substance?

It is by this question, that his Lordship proposed to prove against Mr. Locke, and with his own assistance, that the idea of spirit is more obscure than that of body. And were it not for the difficulty it contains, he assures us, p. 510, that

we might as well affirm the existence of immaterial as of material substance.

Let us therefore try, whether it may not be fairly removed. It has been said, that thought is the primary idea or essence of the soul. And this I venture still to maintain, notwithstanding the objection, by which his Lordship seems to think the notion so effectually confuted. He has expressed it thus, 511.

Thought

Thought then, actual thought, is the essence of the soul or spirit, and by consequence so inseparable from it, that we cannot conceive the soul or spirit to exist separately from or exclusively of thought. But this I know to be untrue: and I may well own, since Locke has owned the same, that I have "*one of those dull souls that does not always perceive itself to contemplate ideas.*" I distinguish very well between being asleep and being awake; I continue to live, but not to think during the soundest sleep, and the faculties of my soul and body awake together.

Now I readily acknowledge, that if the soul does not think always, in sleep as well as when we are awake, thought cannot be the primary quality, or constitute the essence of it. But that we do think always, and that there is no intermission of thought, even in sleep, I apprehend to be a proposition capable of being very sufficiently proved. To this purpose it is to be observed, that there is a plain fallacy in that expression, that we do not *always perceive* ourselves "*to contemplate ideas.*" The word "*contemplation*" seems to imply some deliberate exercise of the mind upon this or that particular object. It is allowed, that we are not always thus employed in sleep: but then it must be allowed too, that this is by no means our constant employment, when we are awake. There are many people, who, for the most part, are as far from a state of contemplation when they are awake, as when they are asleep; and whose waking thoughts are, in the general run of them, as trifling and insignificant as their sleeping ones. I say as their sleeping ones. For that we do sometimes

times think in our sleep, is as evident as that we ever think when we are awake. Lord Bolingbroke therefore has stated the objection very unfairly, when he says, *the faculties of my soul and body awake together*. For this plainly implies, that we never think at all in our sleep; which surely must have been contrary to his Lordship's own experience. For if he ever dreamed, that was as truly an exercise of his thinking power, whatever that power be, as the writing of these essays. But it is not only now and then that we are known to think in our sleep; most people are conscious to themselves, that they do it very often. Nor is there any one faculty, by which we are distinguished as thinking beings, when we are awake, which is not by many exercised and employed when they are asleep. Many are known to rise in their sleep, and to go about their usual employments with as much regularity and order as when they are awake. There are many too, who talk in a manner as truly rational when sleeping as when awake; especially if they are encouraged by the conversation of any waking person at hand. Here is plainly reason exercised in sleep. And is it not well known, that our dreams are very often, if not generally founded upon some preceding transactions of the day? This is a plain instance of recollection and memory. And there is another phaenomenon or fact, which plainly proves the memory to be exercised or employed in sleep; and that even by our own voluntary choice and determination. For how many are there, who, when they have fixed over night upon some particular hour, at which they purpose to awake in the morning, can be as exact and punctual to that, as to any appointment or assignation of the day. Whence can this proceed, but from their mind's retaining the remembrance of its resolution formed over night, and exerting a volition, even when they are asleep, to awake at the time they had previously fixed upon? For the volition to awake must needs precede the awaking itself, and be therefore formed, whilst they

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are asleep. And nothing can be a greater proof, that such a volition is actually formed, than their being able to observe so exactly the time prefixed. So that all instances of this kind, and they are not a few, are instances of volition exerted in sleep, as well as of the employment and exercise of the memory. In our dreams likewise such volitions are very frequently exerted. We will, according to the nature of our dreams, either to shun danger, or to enjoy the agreeable scene, which imagination, another power of the human mind, presents to our view. These volitions necessarily imply the exercise of those passions and affections of the soul, to which they respectively correspond; and I suppose there are few who do not know, by their own experience, that in sleep they fear, they hope, they love, they hate, they rejoice, they mourn, as truly as they ever do when awake. Thus it undeniably appears, that there is not any one faculty or power belonging to the human mind, and which we exert when we are awake, that is not likewise upon many occasions exerted and employed when we are asleep. Reason, memory, will, passions, affections, imagination, are all of them very frequently known to be in actual exercise and employment, during this supposed state of insensibility. And I think, from such incontestable proofs as these, that we do so very frequently think in our sleep, there cannot be a more natural inference drawn, than that we always do so. We must be unreasonably captious to insist upon greater evidence than this in the case; greater than this we cannot have, unless we could contrive a method of having some men incessantly watched by others throughout all the sleeping hours of their lives; and then I doubt not but greater would appear. But upon such evidence as this and far less, we make no scruple of admitting other facts and other maxims. In short, with such proofs as these of our thinking so very frequently in our sleep, nothing can be more unreasonable than to imagine, that at other times we do not.

For

For is not sleep, according to all the appearances of probability, one uniform mode or scene of existence to man? Yet what can make it to be a more differing and heterogeneous one; than to suppose, that some part of it is spent in thinking, and that in other parts of it we are intirely and absolutely divested of thought. I cannot well conceive of a more preposterous imagination. For the common objection, that we are not always sensible when we awake of our having been employed in thought, during the preceding state of sleep, has, I think very little weight in it. From like reasons it might as well be proved, that we do not always think when we are awake. For can we always tell in one hour what we had been thinking of in the last? Nay, do not many of our waking thoughts pass through our minds in such a quick succession, as to be forgotten in an instant? Besides, in answer to this objection, it has been very justly alleged, that persons are frequently known by those who have an opportunity of observing it, to be thinking in their sleep, though they themselves, when awaking out of that very sleep, have not the least remembrance of it. And a farther remark to the same purpose has been this; that tho' we sometimes awake without the apprehension of having had any thoughts or ideas in our minds, during the preceding state of sleep, yet some occurrences of the succeeding day do not unfrequently remind us of our dreams, and convince us that we had. To which likewise it has been added, that oftentimes, when we awake, we have a very clear apprehension that we have been thinking in our preceding state of sleep, tho' we are utterly unable to recollect any particular subject, upon which our thoughts have been employed.

P. 512. It will cost a reasonable mind much less to assume, that a substance known by some of its properties may have others that are un-

known, and may be capable, in various systems, of operations quite inconceivable by us, according to the designs of infinite wisdom, than to assume, that there is a substance, concerning which men do not pretend to know what it is, but merely what it is not.

In this passage there are two or three particulars very remarkable. In the first place, it is evident, that Lord Bolingbroke, notwithstanding the vehemence with which he perpetually exclaims against metaphysicians and divines, for their *assumptions*, their *hypotheses*, their *abstract notions*, their *arbitrary systems*, their *extravagant opinions*, their *fantastical ideas*, was willing to reserve to himself at least the privilege of recurring to assumptions, hypotheses, notions, systems, opinions and ideas of this sort. For what can carry a stronger appearance of a mere *arbitrary* and *fantastical* hypothesis, than to assume that matter may have a property of thinking, though it be confessed that it is an unknown property, which, if it means any thing, must mean, that it has no foundation in the phaenomena of nature, though his Lordship often asserts the contrary, and is a property of which we cannot possibly give any account? In another passage indeed, p. 531. his Lordship seems to say, that he knew very well, that thought was a property of matter, or at least of some portions or systems of matter.

I am persuaded, *says he*, that God can make material systems capable of thought, not only because I must renounce one of the kinds of knowledge that he has given me, and the first, though not the principal, in the order of knowing, or admit that he has done so; but because
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the original principles, and many of the properties of matter being alike unknown to me, he has not shewn me, that it implies any contradiction to assert a material substance.

Now the only possible ways, by which we can suppose the divine Being to have made matter capable of thought, are, either his making thought to be the essence of matter, or his making it to be a property of matter either natural or superadded. The former opinion his Lordship disclaims. That of a faculty of thinking superadded to matter, he appears sometimes, and indeed mostly, to incline to. Yet in this last cited passage, he seems to speak of thinking as a natural property of matter. And tho' in the former part of it he seems to say too, that this is an opinion founded upon our actual knowledge of matter, or at least upon his own actual knowledge of it, yet in the latter part of this very passage, he expressly ranks it among its unknown properties. What confusion and self-contradiction is here? Surely it would have cost his Lordship *less to have assumed* a distinct, thinking substance. His assigning the contrary as a reason for assuming some unknown property of matter, by which to account for thinking, is an instance of extremely weak and inconclusive argumentation, if it may indeed be called argument of any sort. For does not Lord Bolingbroke himself allow, that we have as clear an idea of thought, as we have of solidity or extension? And are there not in the world about us, as many evident and incontestable effects of thought, as of any of the known properties of matter? Is not this likewise admitted by his Lordship? Must it not then be allowed, that these effects do at least as naturally and directly lead the mind to the idea of a distinct thinking substance, as the phaenomena of the visible world to the idea of a material substance? And is it not beyond all degrees of comparison more rational, which is what I suppose

pose his Lordship means by *its costing less to assume*, to ascribe these distinct appearances of thought to a distinct thinking substance, altogether as intelligible as a material substance, than to ascribe them to some strange, unaccountable and inconceivable property of matter? But farther, in this passage, upon which we are now animadverting, Lord Bolingbroke affirms, that those who contend for a distinct thinking substance, by which to account for thinking in man, do not pretend to know what it is, but merely what it is not.

And to the same purpose, p. 511, he asks,

What is it then which answers solidity and extension, and is the primary quality of spirit? Is it immateriality? Is it the negation of material essence? No man will, I presume, give so silly an answer. At least no man who does must expect a reply.

No man need to have recourse to *so silly an answer*. No man need to content himself with a merely negative definition of spirit. Thought is as direct and positive an idea as solidity or extension. To his Lordship's question therefore any man might give an answer that would be very far from being *silly*. And it is this, that the primary quality of spirit is thought, and that a spirit is a thinking substance. And I believe Lord Bolingbroke would have found himself utterly unable to have proved, that there is any one word in this definition which is not as perfectly intelligible and of as easy comprehension as any word that could possibly be made use of in answer to the question, what are the primary qualities or what is the definition of matter? Whether such a definition be a just and true one, is a point of distinct consideration. But that it is a definition perfectly intelligible, who can deny?

P. 516, 17. *Note.* You would smile if you heard any one say, that the man who has preserved the faculty of walking, after having lost and recovered frequently the use of his legs, will for this reason walk eternally. But you hearken very gravely when you hear another say, on as little knowlege, that he will think eternally; because he has preserved the capacity of thinking, after losing it in the whole or in part on so many occasions.

I suppose his Lordship might *smile* too at the aptness and ingenuity of this similitude. And yet I think I can very plainly see, that it is little or nothing to the purpose. For those who admit (and they are the persons here referred to) that thinking may be, and is upon many occasions, for a time suspended, as in sleep, or in a deliquium, never, as I apprehend, urged this as a reason, at least, not as a main or principal reason, for believing that men would *think eternally*. But believing the eternal existence of our thinking principle or faculty upon other considerations they have alleged, that our ceasing upon such occasions to think, could be no objection to that belief, and that it could be no proof of our ceasing to think for ever at death, because it plainly appears, that even in such instances of a total cessation of thought, if any such there be, the faculty of thinking was not destroyed; and that therefore, supposing death to be a present cessation of thought, it would not from thence follow, that it was the intire and total destruction of our thinking powers. Or at most these phaenomena have been considered as affording a presumption additional to the more direct arguments for the immortality of the soul, and founded upon analogy, that, as in these instances there is a re-

covery of thought after a total cessation of it, so it may be at death, supposing that likewise to amount to such a total cessation. These, however, I apprehend, are the utmost advantages that can in reason be made of the phaenomena, to which his Lordship's observation refers; the frequent cessation and recovery of thought in the present state. And these arguments must, I think, still remain conclusive, if the phaenomena be admitted, how much soever any others that have been founded upon them, may by it be invalidated.

P. 520. We cannot contemplate other souls, as we can other bodies.

This is a remark, by which, as well as by so many others to be met with in these volumes, Lord Bolingbroke endeavours to debase and to disparage the study of the human mind, in comparison with the study of body or of mere matter. And it has the fate likewise, with the rest, to be founded upon an absolute contradiction to the phaenomena, as well as to what he himself upon other occasions advances. He tells us, p. 510. that

There are many questions no doubt, to be asked concerning body, which it is impossible to answer, as well as concerning spirit; because we are made incapable of knowing the real essence of any substance.

According to this observation then, it must be allowed, that we can know at least, as much of the *essence* of other souls, as we can of the *essence* of other bodies, or even of our own. And, tho' his Lordship is pleased to tell us, p. 510, that

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The ideas we receive by reflection—do not reach up to the apparent nature of the substance that causes them, *and that* the ideas we receive from sensation, do reach up to the apparent nature of the substance that causes them ;

Yet, I suppose, enough has already been said to shew, that this maxim is purely arbitrary ; and that the acknowledged effects of thought, do at least as naturally *reach up to a thinking substance*, as the *apparent* and most probable *cause of them*, as any of the phaenomena of the visible world, to a *material substance*, as the *cause of them*. With respect therefore, both to the *real* and to the *apparent* nature (according to his Lordship's distinction) or essence of spirit, we may know just as much concerning other spirits, as we can concerning our own, or concerning other bodies. For as to these effects of thought, are they not as apparent and visible in the conduct of other men, as the effect of body ?

Lord Bolingbroke very justly ridicules the hypothesis of Des Cartes, by which brutes are made to be mere machines, when he tells us, p. 529, that

Men believe still, that there is some difference between the parish clock and the town bull ; that the shepherd's dog perceives and wills as really as the shepherd himself ; and that the philosopher's horse knows the way to his stable, as well as the philosopher knows the way to his study,

But would it not be somewhat more ridiculous in his Lordship to deny, that any man besides himself had a soul, and thus to reduce the whole human race, with this single exception, into that very state of mere mechanism, into
which

which the Cartesian hypothesis reduces the whole tribe of animals? And yet this he must do or else allow, that we are capable of contemplating *other spirits as well as other bodies*, and of knowing by the observations we may make upon other men's conduct, that they have the same passions and affections, the same powers of reason, volition and imagination with ourselves, as certainly as we know, that they have the same limbs, senses and bodily organs as we. And thus we may come to know, that whatever be the nature, essence, or substance of a human spirit, there are other beings as certainly endowed with it as ourselves. But if we were not capable of knowing any thing of this sort by our *contemplations*, but of contemplating *only* other bodies, what ground could any man have for believing the existence of any one human soul besides his own? Or by what other means could his Lordship know that brutes had souls, than by *contemplating* them; that is, by contemplating those phaenomena, by which the existence of them is so evidently proved? But if his Lordship's maxim must needs be admitted, and it be acknowledged for a truth, that

“ We cannot contemplate other souls as we
“ can other bodies,”

And *that* therefore, as he expressly asserts in the very same page, and in the words immediately preceding,

All our knowlege of soul or spirit must be founded to be real, on what every man may know by intuition of his own soul or spirit,

there is another consequence, which I think cannot be avoided, and that is, that all the ignorance, and pride, and
vanity,

vanity, and presumption and madness, which his Lordship has so liberally imputed to philosophers, metaphysicians and divines was, after all, his own ignorance, his own pride, and vanity, his own presumption, and his own madness. For *we cannot*, he says, *contemplate other souls*. And if this be true, we must be utterly at a loss to comprehend, how he could know any thing of these particulars, but, as he expresses it, by the *intuition of his own soul*. I believe however, that in both these methods he might know something of those qualities, which these terms can, in any just sense of them, be thought to denote. And thus we reject his maxim as arbitrary and ridiculous,

P. 528. The plain man has recourse once more to the phaenomena, and objects, that we must be reduced, if we receive this hypothesis (*that whatever thinks is a simple being, immaterial, indissoluble, and therefore immortal*) to assert, that other animals, besides men, have immaterial and immortal souls; or that no other animal, besides man, has the faculty of thinking.

That brutes have in some degree or other the faculty of thinking seems so evident, that it may well be presumed, there are few in comparison who will take upon them to deny it. The force, therefore, of this dilemma, must be supposed in the intention of his Lordship and of others, who insist upon it, to depend upon the conclusion, that the immortality of the soul is a direct, immediate and necessary consequence of its immateriality. And expressions have, I believe, been made use of by some of those, who have contended for the

the immortality of the soul, that may seem to intimate something of this sort. Yet certain it is, that an immaterial creature must be as entirely dependent, for the continuance of its being, upon the will of its creator, as a material one; and that by his power the one may be as easily annihilated as the other. So that the hypothesis, which maintains the annihilation of brutal souls, and the continued, perpetual existence of human souls, does not at all require, in order to its being consistently maintained; that, whilst we assert the immateriality of the latter, we should either affirm the materiality of the former, or deny their existence. But, after all, should it be allowed, that immortality was the natural consequence of immateriality, that by the divine appointment it had been made so, and at the same time, that the souls of brutes were immaterial, still the objection would be as Bishop Butler justly styles it in his *analogy*, part i. ch. i. p. 34. "invidious." And, I think, that man can scarce deserve to be immortal, who would rather forfeit the privilege, than allow the beneficent creator to bestow it upon inferior beings, whether it be supposed to imply the limitation of their faculties, as at present limited, or the gradual enlargement of them. But tho' the immateriality of the soul does not by necessary consequence imply its immortality, nor can be thought any otherwise connected with it, than by the appointment and ordinance of the supreme Creator, yet if by other considerations its immateriality be fully evinced, it is apparent that this must greatly corroborate the argument in favor of the perpetuity of its being, and of the supposition that such a connection has really, by the divine appointment, been established. For those who deny the immortality of the soul, always consider death as a period which terminates and puts a final end to its existence. But if its immateriality be admitted, there can be no more reason for believing, that it is destroyed by death than by any other event happening to the bodily system;

tem; since the dissolution of this or that particular system of matter cannot in the least imply or give the least reason to suspect the dissolution of those thinking powers and faculties, which belong to a substance totally and essentially different from matter. And it must surely be no small advantage in this argument to shew, that the only phaenomenon which is supposed to imply the final destruction of our thinking powers, cannot, according to the very nature of those powers, be with any color of reason imagined to imply any such destruction. It cannot therefore without the most manifest impropriety be alleged,

That the opinion of the soul's immateriality adds no strength to that of its immortality.

And yet not only is this insinuated by his Lordship, p. 535, but he even tells us, p. 559, that

The (plain man) might very reasonably ask the metaphysical divine, for what reason he "*clogs*" the belief of the soul's immortality with that of its immateriality; since the former is sufficient to answer all the ends of religion.

Whether such a question be indeed *reasonable*, and it be really true, that the belief of the soul's immateriality is a *clog* to the belief of its immortality, instead of *adding any strength to it*, must depend intirely upon what his Lordship has previously advanced. And as this has been already briefly examined, it will not, I presume, be necessary to take this present remark into distinct consideration. I cannot however forbear to observe, that the sentiment contained in the latter part of it is extremely just. It is undoubtedly true, that the belief of the soul's *immortality is sufficient*, so far as relates to this subject, *to answer all the purposes*

purposes of religion, and that this belief, as his Lordship farther intimates, *ibid.* may be maintained, even upon the supposition of its *materiality*. For as its immortality, whether it be material or immaterial, must depend entirely upon the will of the Creator, and as there is no more difficulty in conceiving, that a *material soul*, if such a soul can be itself conceived of, should be continued in an eternal existence by the divine power, than in believing the same concerning an *immaterial soul*, all the arguments for the continuance and perpetuity of human souls, which are drawn from the moral perfections of God, must have the same general force and conclusiveness, whether these souls are thought to be material or immaterial.

P. 531. It implies contradiction manifestly; to say, that a substance capable of thought by its nature, in one degree or instance, is by its nature incapable of it in another.

This is an observation made by his Lordship with a view of overthrowing that distinction so commonly to be met with between a rational and sensitive soul, the one supposed to be characteristical of the human species, the other of the brutal and merely animal. Whether the distinction be strictly and in all respects just, I do not here enquire. But *that it implies any contradiction to say, that a substance capable of thought by its nature, in one degree or instance, is by its nature incapable of it in another*, I absolutely deny. For as the nature of all substances, besides that of the self-existent being himself, must needs be intirely dependent upon him who created the very beings or substances themselves, there can be no more difficulty in supposing, that he should create substances capable of thinking, and endow them with different powers, all, however, comprehended under the general denomination of thought, than that he should
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endow different portions or systems of matter with different forms, motions and modifications, and cause some systems of matter in this or that particular manner formed, moved or modified, to produce effects, that can never be expected from other systems of matter otherwise formed, moved or modified. And when his Lordship would prove the contrary, he puts us off with a simile, instead of an argument.

A nature, (*he says, p. 532.*) capable of sensation, that is, of perception, that is of thought (to say nothing of spontaneous motion, of memory, nor of the passions) cannot be incapable of another mode of thinking any more than finite extension can be capable of one figure alone, or a piece of wax, that receives the impression of one seal, cannot receive that of another.

Whereas, if he would here have given us a just specimen of analogical reasoning, he should have made it to appear, that matter under this or that particular form or modification, was naturally capable of producing all the same effects which it is known to do under any other; that a horse, for instance, tho' limited in the *exercise* of his *powers* (which his Lordship allows, *ibid.* may be the case with respect to *substances capable of thought*) is yet by virtue of the uniform *nature* of matter as *capable* of flying as of galloping.

P. 536, 7. We are conscious of certain modes of thinking, of certain faculties and operations of what we call mind, and which we call
affect-

affections and passions. This is some degree of knowlege, no doubt, and it might be improved to conduct better our understandings and our lives too. But then the principles of it, the mental phaenomena, are few; and beyond those that are obvious to immediate reflection there are none to be discovered. There are neither microscopes nor telescopes to assist our inward sight, and neither geometry nor algebra can be of any real use in this part of natural philosophy: whereas, in the other, the vast science of human nature, which will never be quite opened, is always opening to human industry. We discover frequently new phaenomena, or we correct and improve our former observations; and every step of this kind is an advancement of science. These reflections may serve to explain how it has come to pass, that philosophers have made such a mighty progress in the knowlege of corporeal nature, even within little more than a century; whereas their knowlege of spiritual nature is no greater now than it was three thousand years ago, and than it will be three thousand years hence, if the generations of men continue so long.

It has been said of Socrates, that he endeavoured to turn mens thoughts and contemplations more peculiarly to religious and moral studies, supposing them to be of much greater

greater importance than the mere investigation of material elements. And from this passage, as well as from several others, that have been cited and briefly examined, it appears, that Lord Bolingbroke may well be considered as an Anti-Socrates, who would confine us wholly to the contemplation and study of body alone. It must, however, be no small pleasure to those who have cultivated a relish for mental and moral inquiries, as of a higher nature and of superior moment, to think that they may still with great reason continue to indulge their taste, notwithstanding any thing that has been advanced by his Lordship. For in this passage, as well as in those relative to the same general subjects, which have been already considered, nothing can be more evident, than that he is obliged to content himself with mere arbitrary maxims formed in direct opposition to well known facts and universal experience. And a little reflection will suffice to shew, that it is one continued series of misrepresentation. Thus he tells us, that *the mental phaenomena are few*. What can be more manifest than the contrary? Are not the mental phaenomena just as many as the actions of mankind in every age and in every part of the world? Since to account for any one of these and for all together, we must necessarily have recourse to some powers, passions or affections of the human mind as the cause of them. And is it not from the actions of mankind, those mental phaenomena, that the maxim so generally and for so long a time established in the world, namely, that man is a reasonable, sociable, and self-loving creature has been deduced? And are there not many particular powers and affections, subservient to these general, first and fundamental ones, as well known in the world to be the properties of the human mind, as any of the most incontestable properties of matter are known to belong to that? Do not these various powers, principles and affections of the human mind constitute a system of

mental and moral causes, as obvious to the human understanding, as any physical causes whatsoever? By recurring to these, may we not as easily, as naturally, and with as full satisfaction to ourselves, account for a vast variety of human actions, as we do for any of these material phenomena, by recurring to any of the received maxims of natural, or as it might in this argument be more properly distinguished, of corporeal philosophy? If we offer a man a bribe, by which we would induce him to betray his country, and he accepts it and commits the treason; is not his selfishness and love of money apparent? And is not here an experiment as clearly and certainly made in the mental and moral system, as we can suppose any to be made in physics? If we make the same offer to another, and he rejects it, is it not equally clear, in this case, that the love of his country is superior to the love of gain? And are there not innumerable other experiments of this mental kind to be made with equal certainty? Are they not in fact made in every transaction and affair of human life?

This is some degree of knowledge, no doubt, and it might be improved to conduct better our understandings and our lives too.

To this very sparing concession of his Lordship's, we will only add, leaving all farther and more particular reflections to the candid judgment of the reader, that this knowledge is as clear and as certain, as any that is to be met with in the philosophy or science of body, and that these principles do in fact and most apparently contain knowledge of the utmost importance, and from which, when compared with the demonstrated perfections of the supreme and universal Creator, consequences of infinite moment may with the greatest clearness and strength of reasoning be deduced.

When

When his Lordship farther tells us, that

There are no mental principles, or mental phaenomena to be discovered beyond those which are obvious to immediate reflection,

he contradicts the universal sentiment of mankind, and, we may venture to say, his own. For, according to this maxim, no man could become one jot the wiser, with respect to his knowledge of the human mind, by farther thought and reflection, by extending his views and enlarging his acquaintance with the conduct and history of human life. A rash, hasty, and superficial judgment, would be as likely to be a true one, as that which is calm and deliberate. And I suppose every one will immediately apprehend, that had his Lordship been equally inclined to it, he might with just as much propriety have laid down the same maxim with respect to the study of body as of mind. As little to the purpose altogether are these subsequent observations, that there are

neither microscopes nor telescopes to assist our inward sight, and neither geometry nor algebra, can be of any real use to us in this part of natural philosophy.

For do not a more deliberate attention and a more impartial use of our reason, upon religious and moral subjects, and in our enquiries concerning mental powers and the *mental phaenomena*, answer exactly the same end, as the microscope or the telescope in the science or study of matter? Are not both these instruments included in the one faculty or power of human reason? Does not every man, by a more diligent and faithful exertion of this faculty, than

he had before been accustomed to, of course enlarge his views, make *new discoveries*, with relation to the principles of human action, and enter more exactly and minutely into the knowledge of human nature? Does he not by the like means discover the fallacy of many arguments of the strength and solidity of which he had before been fully convinced, and detect many errors both in his own conduct and that of others? And what is all this but so much mental *correction* and *improvement*? Surely Lord Bolingbroke himself was not without his apprehensions, that by a continued use of these intellectual telescopes and microscopes he had *corrected* and *improved*, many of his *former observations*, and made great *advancement* in the mental science, since the time of his reading Dr. Manton's sermons, which, it seems, he had read, when he was a boy. And so far as *geometry* and *algebra* strengthen the faculty of reason by a regular and steady exercise of it, so far as they help us to acquire a habit of fixing our attention upon any subject proposed, of comparing ideas, and of tracing up evidence gradually to the very point of strict demonstration; so far undoubtedly they must contribute, in no small degree, to our assistance in every subject of enquiry, whether mental or corporeal. There is likewise another very obvious use to be made of geometrical reasonings and algebraic calculations in the science or study of the mind. For they are themselves so many phaenomena, which as clearly demonstrate man to be a rational creature capable of making very great improvements in the exercise and by the use of reason, as any of the discoveries in natural philosophy, that are made by their aid, demonstrate this or that particular property or power of matter. So that they are exactly of the same use in our enquiries concerning mind, as any of the phaenomena, which they discover, are in our inquiries concerning body. By the undeniable testimony and evidence of fact they lead us up to a certain principle,
power

power or faculty essentially belonging to the human mind, just as the phaenomena of the material world lead us up to the properties and powers of matter. Thus, undoubtedly, must the case stand, with respect to the discoveries and improvements, which particular persons are capable of making in the science or philosophy of the mind. And as to the state of this mental science in the different ages of the world; admitting his Lordship's observation to be true, that no advances have been made in it for this *three thousand years*, it will by no means follow from hence, that it is a science less adapted than that of body to our natural faculties. On the contrary, this will undeniably prove, that it is a science which has at all times engaged mens attention, to which they have from the beginning found themselves naturally addicted, and in which they have been from the earliest ages capable of making very clear and certain discoveries, and of establishing principles and conclusions of indisputable importance.

P. 548. When I consider how little knowledge the phaenomena give us of one (*spiritual nature*) and that we are not able to go by their help a step beyond the first appearances, whilst we extend our knowledge of the other (*corporeal nature*) wider, and carry it higher, in the order of causes; I am ready to think that God, who leaves us in many cases to collect his will, as he has made us able to collect it, from his works, shews manifestly, in this case, how repugnant it is to the designs of his all-wise providence, that we should attempt to acquire knowledge of soul or spirit, and how conformable
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it is to these designs that we should employ our industry and penetration to acquire knowlege of body, terrestrial and celestial, in order to promote in general the advantages of human life, and those particularly, that result from an adoration of the supreme Being in a contemplation of his works.

After the several remarks, that have been already made upon this general subject, all that I would here particularly observe, is, that our noble author, even in laying down the maxim, by which he would discourage the mental science, and all attempts to *acquire knowlege of soul or spirit*, expresses himself in such terms as plainly shew, both that such science is very attainable, and that its object is in the highest degree interesting and important. For when he talks of the *industry and penetration* to be employed in endeavoring to *acquire knowlege of body*, what is this, but the industry and peneration of mind? When he speaks of the *advantages of human life*, arising from *the knowlege of body terrestrial and celestial*, is it not obvious to reflect, that the knowlege of body, either in the one or in the other of these kinds, would be of very little advantage to human life, and that the whole apparatus of the material world, grand and inexpressibly beautiful as it is, would have contributed very little to human happiness, had not man been endowed with those rational powers, by which only he is enabled to accommodate its various elements, forms and productions to his own advantage? And what clearer or more certain proof can possibly be given of his being endowed with such a mental faculty, than the various uses, to which they have been actually applied and made subservient, by the several inventions, arts, and occupations of mankind? or where would have been the advantage of these

these inventions, arts, and occupations, had there not been implanted likewise in the mind of man those principles of self-love and benevolence, each of which operating so strongly and powerfully towards its own end, and yet so exactly harmonizing with the other, social connections, have been established, interests united, and that firm league and commerce between man and man maintained, from whence has been derived justice, property, order, laws, government, and all the blessings of civil life? By what powers, but those of mind, can we contemplate the works of God in the visible and material world? or with what affections but those of mind can we adore the supreme former of every spiritual nature, and of every corporeal system? And can we possess these powers and yet be ignorant of them? Can we exercise these affections, and yet be strangers to them? Be it then acknowledged, that as mind, immortal mind, is the seat, so also the noblest subject of devotion.

P. 548, 9. For my own part, I am firmly persuaded, that there is a supreme Being, the fountain of all existence, by the efficacy of whose will the whole universe was made and is governed, as well as preserved; in a word, who is the first efficient cause of all things, and on whom all his creatures depend. But for this very reason, and because I have this awful sense of the supreme Being, I do not presume to familiarise myself with him, as the men, who bring this charge (*that of keeping God at a distance*) are apt to do.

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His Lordship has here assigned the strongest reason imaginable for our endeavoring to acquire as much knowledge of God, as the imperfection and limitations of our present condition of being will by any means admit of, and for our applying ourselves with all possible assiduity to the contemplation of his attributes and perfections. This is a study, which, when justly pursued, cannot but be in the highest degree improving and productive of the most important effects. And if his Lordship means any thing besides this knowledge of God, and the corresponding affections of love, reverence and devotion, by *familiarising ourselves with him*, such a familiarity will be rejected by others, as well as by himself.

P. 555, 6. The notion which these metaphysical reasoners have framed about the human soul or spirit, makes them slide easily and almost necessarily into that familiarity with the Father of spirits, which has been censured above, into conclusions little less, if at all less, than blasphemous.—Between him (God) and the highest created being, the distance must be still infinite (*that is, as his Lordship would be understood to mean, in the nature or essence of their being.*)—But the men we have to do with have accustomed themselves to think in the same manner and to speak in the same stile of the divine and human spirit, with no other difference, than that of adding infinite to the one and finite to the other. They conceive them both to be alike immaterial beings and substances too.

If it be a good argument against supposing our souls to be of the same nature with that of the divine spirit, that is, immaterial, that then there would be *no other difference than that of adding infinite to the one, and finite to the other*, this would be just as good an argument against the belief of our being intelligent creatures, to whatever substance we impute the intelligence, as a property of it. For as intelligence is an undoubted attribute of the divine nature, if any creature be endowed with it, there is then *no other difference*, but that of *adding infinite* to the divine, and *finite* to the created intelligence. But as this observation seems to have been introduced for the sake of repeating the censure against that *familiarity* with God, to which his Lordship seems so much averse, I would ask; to what purpose is it that we have any belief of a God at all, if we are to have no communication with him, no reference of our thoughts and affections to him, but are to confine ourselves wholly to the contemplation of mere corporeal phaenomena. And yet, under the term *familiarity*, his Lordship seems desirous of censuring, of discouraging, and even of condemning, as presumptuous and *blasphemous*, all desire of knowing God, all ambition of being like him.

P. 557. He (*the plain man*) is forced to conclude with Lucretius :

“ —Gigni pariter cum corpore, & unâ

“ Crescere, sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.”

To this *plain man*, however, I would suggest the following considerations, upon this head. First, it does not appear, that old men have fewer ideas, than they had when they were young; which is the thing that should be proved by any one, who supposes the phaenomena of old age to favor the notion of the soul's dissolution and destruction at death.

death. For surely no inference can be drawn in proof of an approaching cessation of thought, and even of the thinking faculty itself, merely because the thoughts of old men are not conversant about the same objects, to which they chiefly attended in the earlier seasons of life. As well might the sprightly and vigorous days of youth, or of middle age, be alleged in proof of the same. Since at these seasons of life our thoughts are very differently employed from the manner, in which they were used to be employed in the days of our childhood. Our passions and affections are not interested in the same objects, which then so much engaged them. Nor do we in these riper years remember the same things, the light and trifling occurrences of life, with the same facility as we did before. So that if old men think as much at this declining age, as ever they did, tho' their thoughts may not be employed upon the same, or upon so great a variety of subjects, there can be no more reason for believing the dissolution of the soul, or thinking power in man to be then approaching, than at any other period or season of human life. Secondly, the force of the argument drawn by the objectors to the soul's immortality from the phaenomena of old age, seems to lie in this, that, as the dissolution of the body approaches, the powers of the soul appear to be upon the decay, in consequence of their immediate connection with the body, and absolute dependance upon it, for their very being. But if this were the reason of the supposed decay of the mental faculties in old men, it would follow, that this decay would discover itself far more uniformly and in a much nearer parity of degrees, in every instance of old age, than is in fact the case. It would likewise follow, that whenever death was, through the sickness and infirmity of the body, approaching, even tho' it were in the youthful part, or in the middle age of life, the same symptoms of our spiritual dissolution would of course appear; since the very same reason, to which the supposed decay of the mental faculties in old age is imputed, does

does, in every such instance, actually subsist. But this is contrary to perpetual experience. Neither is there, thirdly, any more propriety in the two preceding observations contained in this Lucretian maxim, than in the concluding one. It must needs be obvious to every one, that the chief mental improvements are made after the body is arrived at its full maturity. The mind does not indeed acquire new faculties after the growth of the body is perfected. Neither does the growth of the body, from the days of infancy to those of manhood, imply the accession of any new bodily powers, but only a gradual advance towards maturity of those, which originally belonged to it. And in this sense it is evident, that the mind is often growing, improving, and advancing towards its perfection, when the body is manifestly upon the decay. So that it is not true in fact, that the mind and body "grow up together." And as to that other maxim, that they are "born together," or that their existence began together, if it be its meaning to affirm that the mind commenced together with the body as a part of its system, this is taking one considerable point of the question in debate for granted, and is no more than asserting, that the soul is material, without offering at any proof at all. But if by this observation be meant, that the soul, as a distinct substance, was produced at the same time as the body, it is evident that this cannot at all impair the argument in favour of its immortality. From the principles contained in this maxim of Lucretius, and from the several other passages in this essay, which have been already considered, Lord Bolingbroke has drawn the following conclusions;

That revelation apart, he saw no positive or determining proof of any of these doctrines, *meaning* the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, (*see p. 557 compared with p. 556.*)

That

That all the phaenomena from our birth to our death seem repugnant to the immateriality and immortality of the soul. P. 557.

And,

That it would be for the interest of these and several other doctrines to let them rest on the authority of revelation. Ibid.

He says, indeed, p. 558, that

On such principles as these, tho' he could not affirm, he would not deny the immortality of the soul. What indeed should tempt him to do so? In whatever world, in whatever state he is, he knows, that the same God governs? What then has he to fear in one more than in another? Nothing surely, if he thinks as he ought to think of the all-perfect Being. Such God is.

And farther, *ibid.* he says, that he is

Flattered, not terrified, with any faint appearance of immortality in prospect.

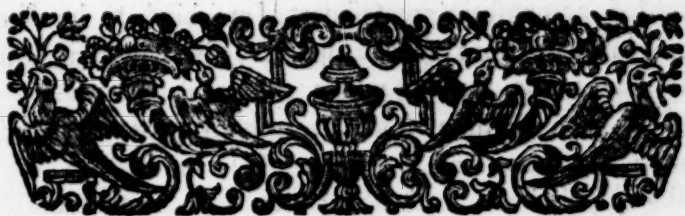
These several conclusions, it is true, are advanced in the person of the *plain man*. But Lord Bolingbroke has given them his own sanction, by saying, p. 561.

Thus, I believe, our plain man would leave the matter; and thus I leave it too.

Here then we shall conclude our reflections upon the "essay concerning the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge."

End of the First Part.

NOTES



N O T E S

ON THE

Philosophical WRITINGS

OF

Lord *BOLINGBROKE*.

P A R T II.



OL. IV. p. 19, 20. Eff. II. The Mosaic account (*relating to the early date of polytheism and idolatry in the world*) is plainly inconsistent with itself, as it stands in the books we have under the name of Moses.

This is a charge intirely founded upon the supposition, that according to the Mosaic account, the unity of God had been made known to mankind by an extraordinary and supernatural revelation first communicated to Adam. And his Lordship concludes, that had this been really the case, it is utterly impossible, that the belief of it should have been so

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soon lost, amongst the greatest part of mankind, as he assures us, is in that account likewise supposed, especially considering the few hands through which the revelation must have passed, from the time of its having been first made, to the time when, according to his Lordship, the Mosaic history assumes polytheism and idolatry to have been prevalent in the world. But as far as I can find, no such revelation is any where asserted in the Mosaic history. Nor can I even discern the most distant intimations of it. And I think we may be very well assured, that, had the royal Psalmist apprehended any such assertion or intimation to have been contained in the writings of Moses, he would not have contradicted it so expressly, as he does, when he ascribes all the knowledge which the heathens had of the supreme Being, to the discoveries which are made of him in the works of nature. "The heavens, he says, declare the
"glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy
"work. Day unto Day uttereth speech, and night unto
"night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is
"gone out through all the earth, and their words unto
"the end of the world." Neither does it appear that St. Paul knew any thing of this extraordinary, supernatural revelation: since, when speaking on this very subject, and of the manner in which God had shewed or *revealed* himself to mankind from the very earliest ages of the world, he supposes it to have been by the visible works of nature, without the least reference to any other method of revelation. "That, he tells us, which may be known of God
"is manifest in them, for God has shewed, or *revealed* it
"unto them. For the invisible things of him, from, or
"ever since, the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his
"eternal power and godhead." Still however the Mosaic history supposes monotheism to have been the original belief of mankind. And this I think we may continue to look upon as the most natural and probable hypothesis, notwithstanding

withstanding all that Lord Bolingbroke has advanced in support of a contrary one. It is allowed, agreeably to his Lordship's observation, p. 20 that

By considering the phaenomena separately, men could not arrive at the knowledge of one supreme Being.

But still it remains to be asked, whether it be at all likely that *men* ever did *consider* them separately. It should rather seem, that, so far as their knowledge went, they could not but observe a connection in the works of creation and providence, a harmony, a unity of design, and a conspiring tendency to one common and ultimate end. And surely it must be more natural to ascribe such a unity of effect to one supreme creator, than to the operation of several, distinct, irrelative, and unconnected powers. One all-perfect Being would sufficiently account for all the phaenomena of nature. To the belief of such a Being, the unity of design appearing throughout so great an extent of creation, as must have presented itself to the very first observations of mankind, would naturally lead them; and it seems rather more agreeable to the original simplicity of the human mind, to suppose, that in this belief they should acquiesce, instead of multiplying causes, without any occasion given them from the phaenomena. His Lordship indeed tells us, p. 21. that

Polytheism and idolatry have so close a connection with the few superficial and ill-verified ideas and notions of rude ignorant men, and with the affections of their minds, that one of them could not fail to be their first religious principle, nor the other their first religious practice.

But this is plainly contradicting that *analogy*, upon which he seems to suppose, p. 23 and 68. our reasonings on this ject ought to be founded. For it appears, that in some of those nations, which have been least of all indebted to the cultivation of science and philosophy, the unity of God has been, in fact, a general and prevailing sentiment. Besides, what *affections* can we possibly conceive of naturally belonging to mankind, which would be better gratified by the belief of many gods, than of one? And I suppose his Lordship would scarce have maintained, that the corruption and perversion of our natural affections preceded in the moral condition of the world the influence of these natural affections themselves.

Page 30. God remembered his covenant with Abraham; an absurd expression, but very theological.

If literally understood, *absurd* enough. And the same may be said of almost all those figurative modes of speech, which adorn the most celebrated compositions, whether ancient or modern. But if we interpret the phrase according to the manner which this kind of language necessarily requires, and which in all other instances of the like nature, is, without the least difficulty or objection, admitted, it will appear to be highly expressive and beautiful. It carries in it a clear and striking allusion to the dependance which we have upon the promises or engagements of good and virtuous men. To these the discoveries, which God has made of his perfections in the works of his hands, and which contain so many assurances given to mankind, that he will be their protector, preserver and guardian, throughout every succeeding age of the world are evidently in this figurative expression compared; and our trust and confidence in these perfections thus discovered and made known to our dependance upon the covenants or engagements entered into by men of such a character.

These

These assurances, or this *covenant*, “ God remembered with Abraham.” All the blessings which were bestowed upon him and his posterity, were so many accomplishments of that dependance which he had upon the divine perfections, upon the goodness, wisdom and power of God, with reference both to his own happiness and to theirs. And in the same sense God remembers his covenant with all mankind. The scripture evidently supposes men to entertain, previously to any instructions which itself communicates, the belief of a supreme, infinite and all-perfect Being, who is the Creator and Governor of the universe. And, this belief once established, there is no more danger of their misinterpreting such expressions, as are borrowed from the imperfect faculties of the human mind, and figuratively applied to the Deity, than those which are borrowed from the organs and senses of the human body and in like manner applied. A man, who has just notions of the supreme and absolute perfections of the divine nature, will be no more likely to impute *real* memory or *real* repentance to God, than *real* eyes, hands or arms. The reason which has been sometimes given for such language, namely, that it is intended by way of accommodation to our inadequate conceptions of the divine Being, seems not sufficiently accurate. For certainly, to say that the divine goodness is unchangeable, is to speak as intelligibly, as to say, that God “ remembers his covenant.” To say, that according to the apparent course and established order of God’s providence, an afflicted people or nation will prosper, if they turn from their evil ways, and that calamity and distress will be the unavoidable consequence of a national departure from the laws and maxims of virtue, must be altogether as intelligible, as to say that God will “ repent him concerning his servants.” That God is possessed of almighty and irresistible power, is surely an expression as adequate to human comprehension, as this other, “ the Lord’s arm is not shortened, that he cannot save.” Yet who doth not see the beauty of these figurative terms ; which are made use of

in scripture for the same natural and obvious reasons, that justify and recommend figurative language in general?

P. 183. 4. Are the good and pure spirits in heaven? But where is heaven? Is it beyond all the solar systems of the universe? Or is it like the intermundia of Epicurus, in expanses between them? Are the evil and impure spirits in hell? But where is hell? Is it in the center of any one planet for every system? Or is it in the center of every planet?

“Where is heaven?” — “But where is hell?” Surely his Lordship did well to intersperse these questions with some little scraps of learning and philosophy; otherwise we should have been tempted to believe, that they had only been the effects of the inquisitive genius, which possibly he might have discovered when he was but a child. But to give way for a moment to this childish humour, does not he himself in this very postscript, p. 176. speak of it, as what would be very *absurd and impertinent* in us, to *assert that there are no beings superior to ourselves*, and to *deny their existence*, even tho’ he allows that *we discover only some of their habitations*? Does he not express his approbation of the hypothesis, which affirms *a multitude of other solar systems*, besides our own, *which the immensity of the universe contains*? Does he not affirm, *ibid.* that

there may be and that there are very probably relations both physical and moral between all these numberless worlds, and systems of worlds, as between various parts of one stupendous whole, and the habitations of ten thousand times ten thousand millions of intellectual corporeal beings, who live like us under the providence

vidence, general or particular, of the incomprehensible Creator of all things?

Certainly it could have been no difficult matter for his Lordship to conceive it possible at least, that in this *immensity of creation*, amidst these *numberless systems of worlds*, there might even for intellectual *corporeal beings*, if any such there are, be a *heaven* and a *hell*: so that his questions are altogether as frivolous and *impertinent* upon his own as upon any other hypothesis. Does he not tell us, p. 177, that

There may be minds wherein ideas or notions once received or framed never fade nor vary? Such minds, (*he says*) may discern at one glance, and by immediate intuition the agreement or repugnancy of all their ideas and notions. The solution of the most difficult problem may be to them as easy, as the comparison which shews the equality of twice two to four is to us.

Again he tells us, vol. 5. p. 109, that

All the inhabitants of some other planet may have been perhaps from their creation, united in one great society, speaking the same language, and living under the same government, or too perfect by their nature to need the restraint of any.

And after what he had been so justly observing concerning the immensity of the creation, we may conclude, that he would have thought it highly absurd in any one to ask, Where dwell these perfect beings? To which of the solar systems, that the *immensity of the universe contains*, belongs the planet which they inhabit?

Page 242. Eff. III. A people, *i. e. the Jews*, by their very law excluded from a commerce and communication with the rest of mankind — a people little known, and contemned, and thought vilely of by those nations that did know them.

This is an observation advanced upon the authority, and in the words of Mr. Locke, as they stand in his Reasonableness of Christianity. p. 262. Much to the same effect his Lordship himself observes, p. 280, that

The Jews were unsociable members of the great commonwealth of mankind ;

And, page 189, that

Nothing has been neglected to give not only antiquity, but illustration to a nation, that never had much of the latter, out of their own writings and those of Christianity.

What has been already said concerning the testimony borne to the Mosaic history by heathen writers, and the hospitality and friendship, which they were so expressly enjoined to exercise towards the strangers, who should sojourn amongst them, may suffice as an answer in part to these allegations. And perhaps the following passages, taken from the history of the learned Dr. Prideaux, may give us still farther reason to believe, that both Mr. Locke's observation, and those of Lord Bolingbroke, have been somewhat too hastily made. He tells us, that Alexander the Great “ took care to people his new city Alexandria with colonies drawn thither from many other “ places, among which were many of the Jews, to whom
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“ he gave great privileges, not only allowing them the use
“ of their own law and religion, but also admitting them
“ equally into the same franchises and liberties with the
“ Macedonians themselves.” *Prid. Connection. Vol. I.*
part I. p. 390. Fol. Ed. The same historian informs us
further, that after Alexander’s death, “ Ptolemy Soter
“ having fixed the seat of his government in that place
“ (Alexandria) and set his heart much upon the augment-
“ ing and adorning of it, brought thither many of this na-
“ tion (i. e. the Jews) for the same purpose, where, having
“ granted them the same privileges with the Macedonians
“ and other Greeks, they soon grew to be a great part of
“ the inhabitants of that city.” *Prid. ibid. vol. II. p. 35.*

Page 245. Christianity has been, from the institution of it, in a perpetual flux, not relatively to certain opinions alone, that may be deemed indifferent, or not quite essential ; but relatively to fundamental articles on which the whole system leans.

That Christians have in every age determined very differently concerning particular doctrines of Christianity, and even concerning some of its most important principles, cannot be denied. But this, I think, did not sufficiently authorize his Lordship to say, that *Christianity itself has been in a perpetual flux* ; unless he could have proved, that these different opinions have had the same miraculous attestation given to them, which, if there be any such thing as Christianity at all, must be supposed to have attended the preaching of Christ and his apostles. Lord Bolingbroke himself can, upon other occasions, very readily tell us, where it is that, amidst these different sentiments, the true and genuine system of Christianity is to be found. He observes, for instance, p. 631, 2. that,

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Christianity, genuine Christianity, is contained in the gospels, it is the word of God, it requires therefore our veneration and a strict conformity to it. Traditional Christianity, or that artificial theology, which passes for genuine, and which we all profess, is derived from the writings of the fathers and doctors of the church, and from the decrees of councils. It is therefore the word of men, and of men, for the most part, either very weak, very mad, or very knavish. It requires therefore no regard, nor any inward conformity to it.

Neither can these different sentiments subsisting among Christians, be justly thought to destroy the usefulness of the Christian institution. For may not a miraculous establishment of religion be highly useful, even tho' it does not promote uniformity of opinion? Are there no other valuable purposes to be answered by it? Undoubtedly there are. I cannot therefore think with his Lordship, p. 453, that

Origen answered Celsus very poorly, when to justify or excuse the variety of sects among Christians, he urges those that abounded among heathen philosophers:

if by this be meant his justifying Christianity, notwithstanding these various opinions. For does not his Lordship contend for the reality and usefulness of natural religion, even tho' it must be confessed it does not promote a uniformity of opinion upon some of its own fundamental and most important articles. If natural religion therefore may propose the noblest ends, and be wisely adapted to
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answer them, even though it does not secure a uniformity of opinion, Christianity likewise may be graciously intended and wisely calculated to answer the very same purposes, even tho' it does not any more than the other, secure the like uniformity, and may therefore with perfect consistency be considered as a religion miraculously instituted and established.

Page 261. When we consider the great and glorious purposes of this revelation, the manner in which, and the person, even the Son of God himself, by whom it was made, and all the stupendous miracles, in the heavens and on earth, that were wrought to confirm it, we are ready to conclude, that such a revelation must have left reason nothing to do, must have forced conviction, and have taken away even the possibility of doubt. This consequence seems so necessary, that, if such events were stated hypothetically, the hypothesis would be rejected as defective and inconsistent, unless they were supposed to have had their full effect; and yet, in fact, a universal submission of all those, who were witnesses of the signs and wonders that accompanied the publication of the gospel, did not follow.

In answer to this objection against Christianity, drawn from its imperfect reception among those to whom its evidences were originally proposed, it is to be observed in the first place, that his Lordship's representation of the fact is very delusive. We are told, John xii. 42. that, "among the chief rulers many believed on Christ, but because of
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“ the pharisees, they did not (then) confess him.” And tho’ it appears from this passage itself, as well as from the general strain of the New Testament history, that numbers of the pharisees were violent opposers of the gospel, it appears likewise from the same records, that many of them embraced it. Nicodemus was a pharisee; so was St. Paul. And in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Acts, at the fifth verse, we read of others of the same sect, who were converts to the Christian faith. “ There rose up, (says the historian) certain of the sect of the pharisees, who believed.” The same historian farther informs us, Acts vi. 7. that “ a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” These observations it seemed necessary to make for the sake of obviating any misinterpretation that might be put upon the indefinite terms in which his Lordship expresses himself, when he says, p. 262.

The learned men among the Jews, the scribes the pharisees, the rulers of the people were persecutors of Christianity, not converts to it.

In the very next words his Lordship assures us, that

The vulgar, as well as they, were so far from believing Jesus to be the Messiah their nation expected, or any divine person sent by God, that when Pilate inclined to save him, instead of Barabbas, a notorious criminal, the whole crowd cried out, “ Let his blood be upon us “ and our children,” and insisted with a sort of mutinous zeal on his execution.

Here a single mob acting, as we are expressly told by two of the evangelists, Matth. xxvii. 20. Mark xv. 11. at the instigation of the priests and elders, is made to stand for the whole body of the common people, or at least for the main
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part of it, in direct contradiction to what so clearly appears from the evangelical history to have been the real matter of fact. How averſe ſoever multitudes of the chief rulers among the Jews and phariſees might be to our Saviour and his doctrine, the people in general were well affected to both. "All the people, St. Luke informs us, chap. xix. "48. were very attentive to hear him." And the ſame evangelist tells us, that upon occaſion of a miracle wrought by our bleſſed Saviour, "all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." chap. xiii. 17. and again tells us, that upon another occaſion of the like kind, "all the people gave praiſe unto God;" chap. xviii. 43. Saint Matthew alſo informs us, that at the concluſion of his ſermon upon the mount, "the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine, for he taught them, as one having authority, and not as the ſcribes." Accordingly it appears, that thoſe among the Jewiſh rulers, the ſcribes and the Phariſees, who were our Saviour's moſt malicious enemies, looked upon him as being in general eſteem with the people, and upon the people as being well diſpoſed to receive and to embrace his doctrine, and of a party directly oppoſite to themſelves. This is ſufficiently evident from the queſtions, which ſome of them put to the officers, who declared, that "never man ſpake like Jeſus." Their queſtions were theſe: "Are ye alſo deceived? Have any of "the rulers or of the phariſees believed on him? But this "people, who know not the law are accuſed." John vii. "47, 48, 49. It is evident likewiſe from what the chief prieſts, and the unbelieving phariſees declared in council; "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." John xi. 48. Very agreeably to this account, however contrary to what his Lordſhip would inſinuate, we find that great numbers of proſelytes to the chriſtian religion, were made by the preaching of the apoſtles, among the Jews, as well as among the Gentiles; as is undeniably evident from the whole hiſtory of the Acts of the apoſtles, to which the reader muſt be referred. Theſe particulars being pre-
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mised, we may go on to make it our second observation upon this head, that, tho' Christianity did not, either at the time of its first publication or since, meet with a universal reception among those, to whom its evidences were proposed, it may nevertheless be very consistently and rationally embraced, as a religion miraculously instituted and of divine authority. For may it not have answered many very *great and glorious purposes*, among the numbers of mankind, by whom it has been received ; purposes altogether worthy to have been designed by the supreme all-perfect Deity ; and therefore not unworthy of being accomplished by the instrumentality of the Son of God ? And may not the same purposes continue to be answered, and even more extensively than ever, in some future ages of the world ? Or if it be still insisted upon, that miracles, admitting the truth and reality of them must necessarily, as his Lordship's argument supposes, carry in them such full and striking conviction, as infallibly to gain the assent of all, who were witnesses to them ; let it be considered, where such reasoning will terminate.—In this manifest absurdity, that the stronger evidence we have in proof of any truth or fact, the less reason we must have for believing it, unless it has been universally assented to by all, to whom the like evidences of it have been proposed. Besides, by supposing it impossible, that, if such miracles, as are ascribed to our Saviour and his apostles, had really been wrought, none, who were witnesses of them could have rejected the gospel, we must contradict the most manifest experience of every age and of every nation, by which it so evidently appears, that men are capable both of believing the greatest absurdities, and of denying the plainest truths.

P. 262. The infidel will insist, that all these miracles (*the miracles said to have been wrought in attestation of the gospel*) were equivocal at best, such as credulous superstitious persons and
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none else believed, such as were frequently and universally imposed by the first fathers of the Christian church, and as are so still by their successors, wherever ignorance or superstition abound. He will apply to miracles, what Bessarion said of saints, and bids us judge of the antient by the modern.

This conclusion of the *infidel* is founded upon the objection, which we have been considering in the preceding note. In farther answer therefore to the general objection, and as a confutation, in course, of this infidel conclusion, let it be observed in the third place, that, tho' the gospel was indeed rejected by many of those, who are recorded in the evangelical history as witnesses to the miracles said to have been wrought in confirmation of it; and tho' this may very well be accounted for, supposing these miracles to be true, yet the reception, which it really did meet with at the time of its first publication cannot be accounted for, supposing them to be false. That many attempts have been made to impose false and fictitious miracles upon mankind, especially in the Christian world, is readily allowed. But the *infidel*, who would put the miracles ascribed to Christ and his apostles upon a level with these, must be obliged to account for the very different effect of the supposed miracles in the one case and in the other; or, if he cannot account for it, he must be obliged in reason to reject his hypothesis. And how would he be able to account for it? The falsity of a pretended miracle may be supposed to consist either in imposing upon the faith of others such operations for miraculous, which really are not so, or in imposing a narrative of operations, that were never performed. Had Christ or his apostles, in either of these ways, any peculiar advantages for seducing mankind by fictitious miracles, advantages which none but themselves ever enjoyed? if they had, let these be pointed out;
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if they had not, to what can we ascribe the singular success of their miracles, but to the truth and reality of them? What a wide, amazing difference is obvious upon the very face of history, between the effects, which were consequent upon the miracles ascribed to our blessed Saviour and his apostles, and those ascribed to Apollonius Thyaneus, or any other impostor. The false miracles therefore recorded in history cannot in the least degree diminish the credibility of those, which are supposed to have been wrought by our blessed Saviour and his apostles; since by these differing effects we are furnished with a sure historical criterion, by which to distinguish these last from the others. Nor can the miracles at this day pretended to in the church of Rome at all invalidate the evidence in favor of the reality of those which are recorded in the New Testament. For, I believe, no *infidel* will be hardy enough to affirm, that the faith and doctrines, the interest and authority of the church of Rome are supported by its pretended miracles. On the contrary, these very pretensions, it must be allowed, were they not themselves upheld by more effectual measures, would contribute in no small degree to blast its credit, and to sink it into perpetual infamy and disgrace. Had Christ and his apostles first acquired immense wealth and exorbitant power; and then set up their claim to miracles, the parallel between the modern miracles of the Romish church and those recorded in the New Testament might be admitted: but as the case really stands, nothing can be more ridiculous than to attempt the making of such a parallel. The apostles never acquired wealth for themselves, any more than their Lord and Master; and they had all the wealth and power, as well as the craft and policy of the world against them; and yet they succeeded. The church of Rome has every thing but miracles and truth to support it: the apostles had absolutely nothing else to depend upon, and every thing else to encounter with. From whence it must necessarily follow, that if their claim to miracles had been a false, pretended claim, it must have
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made exactly the same appearance in history, as other claims of the like sort. Whereas by casting our eyes only on the historical criterion mentioned above, we as easily distinguish the genuine miracles of Christianity from the several impostures, that have been attempted in imitation of them, as we do Henry the Seventh of England from Lambert Simnell, or Perkin Warbeck. Somewhat akin to the objection, which has been considered in this and the preceding *note* is that, which is contained in a passage, p. 267; in which his Lordship speaks of Christianity as

A revelation, a belief in which was to decide the eternal happiness or misery of all the sons of men.

And if according to this representation, the belief of the gospel had been by the gospel itself made absolutely necessary to the eternal salvation of all the sons of men, and the not believing it a sure ground and foundation of future misery, it must be owned, that the advocate for Christianity would be pressed with an insurmountable difficulty arising from a question, the solution of which his Lordship, *ibid.* so modestly declines, namely,

Why the divine authority of it was not manifested to all concerned in it, that is, to all mankind?

But, I think, nothing can be more evident, if the sentiment of St. Paul be allowed decisive, or of any weight in the case, than, that Christianity does not make the acknowledgment of its own authority, or the reception of its own principles to be of absolute necessity to our future and eternal salvation. The whole reasoning of this apostle contained in so great a part of the second chapter of his epistle to the Romans, must surely appear upon an impartial, even

tho' it should be but a cursory view of it, to establish a directly contrary sentiment. He there lays it down as an indisputable maxim, when speaking on the very subject of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments to be in that state allotted and dispensed, that "God is no respecter of persons." He instances immediately in the case of the Gentiles, who had no other light or advantages relative to their future happiness, but those of natural religion, and asserts, that by these alone they became "a law to themselves," plainly implying, that by this natural law they were constituted the subjects of God's moral government, and that by their obedience or disobedience to it, their happiness in a future state was to be determined. Nay, this is what he does in so many words affirm, when he declares, that God "renders to every man according to his deeds; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man, that does evil, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace to every man, who worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." Where by the Gentile must necessarily be meant, not the Gentile converted to Christianity, but the Gentile living under the obligations of the original law of nature alone; or, as he himself expresses it, who "not having the law, (not enjoying the advantages of any external and miraculous institution of religion) is (nevertheless) a law unto himself." Directly and fully to the same purpose is that clear, solemn and public declaration made by St. Peter, "Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, he, who feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

P. 264. The contest between the first witnesses of Christian revelation, and the rest of the Jews, who witnessed against it, became a party contest carried on with great zeal on the
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persecuted side, and great cruelty on the other.

By the persons who are here said to have *witnessed against Christianity*, we are, I suppose, to understand all those, among the Jews, who, at the time of the first publication of the gospel, upon any principles whatever, rejected and opposed it. But with what propriety this their rejection of the gospel or opposition to it, can be said to have been a witnessing against it, is a question, that may well deserve to be considered. In one remarkable instance at least, it is apparent, that some of the principal, most zealous and most active of these rejecters and opposers, were *witnesses for Christianity*, according to those historical narratives, from which Lord Bolingbroke himself would be supposed to have taken his own account. “Then gathered, says St. John, ch. xi. 47. the chief priests and the pharisees a council, and said, what do we? for this man (Jesus) does many miracles.” So likewise we are informed by St. Luke, Acts iv. 16. that “the rulers of the people and the elders of Israel” being again assembled in council, said, “What shall we do to these men? (Peter and John) For that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all them, who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.” And then as to the resurrection of Christ, particularly mentioned by his Lordship; did these opposers of the gospel *witness against* it? Far otherwise. Nothing, I think, can be more certain than that, if the resurrection of Christ had been a fiction, it must have been in the power of these men to prove it so. They had all the advantages for doing this, which, upon that supposition, can possibly be imagined. And it is natural to believe, considering their violent enmity to Christ and his religion, that they would, according to the representations of the evangelists, endeavour to make the best use of this power. Equally evident it must surely be, that, if they could have proved it to

have been a fiction, they would have done it; and that the consequence must have been the crushing and utter destruction of the gospel-scheme in the very infancy of it. But as this effect did not take place, as, on the contrary, the gospel "mightily prevailed" first at Jerusalem itself, and was from thence propagated throughout so many nations and kingdoms of the earth, what is to be inferred, but that they neither did, nor could confront the testimony of the apostles upon this head by any contrary evidence. They cannot therefore, with any propriety, be said to have *witnessed* against Christianity. They might argue against it, and they did so. His Lordship too has given us a specimen of what they might have said upon this occasion. For he tells us, p. 262. that

The Jew will insist, that the miracles (*those of our blessed Saviour and his apostles*) might be such as they are reported to have been; but that, if they were such, they were wrought by the powers of magic, like those of Apollonius of Thyana, or by some secret charm, like that of the true pronunciation of the name that consisted of four letters, the famous tetragrammaton.

Whether any thing of this kind was included in imputing the miracles of our Savior to the power of Beelzebub the prince of the devils, as we are told was done by some of the first opposers of the gospel amongst the Jews, I will not presume to determine. But this we may be sure of, that his Lordship did not suppose that the miracles ascribed to our Savior and his apostles could thus be accounted for; and that he believed *magic* to be a term of the same insignificance in accounting even for pretended miracles, as that of chance in accounting for the frame and order of a world; the one being no more a distinct or real art, than the other

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is a distinct or real cause. We may indeed, if we please, call a peculiar knowledge of natural powers and effects, or a peculiar dexterity in the use and application of them by the name of magic; but still, we are as far as ever from being able to account, by having recourse to it, for miracles wrought in an instant, at a distance, without any previous warning given or preparation made, in the most public manner, amidst the most watchful and prying enemies, upon the greatest variety of occasions, yet with equal success, according to the different end proposed.

P. 266. They (*i. e. the Jews of Rome spoken of in the twenty-eighth chapter of the book of Acts*) heard him (*St. Paul*) with remarkable patience, for they heard him from morning to night.

Did Lord Bolingbroke and his friend Pope never spend a day together in conversing upon philosophical subjects? and what was this but *hearing* one another *from morning to night*? Where then was the wit, or judgment, or candor of this intended sneer?

P. 269. But I am apt to suspect, that if time and accidents had been more impartial, and had conveyed down to us, all the proofs, that were brought for it and against it, tho' proofs would have been more abundant, the evidence would not have been greater, and we should be puzzled as much by contradictory, as we are by scanty proofs.

His Lordship is here professedly speaking concerning the external evidences of Christianity; and I have introduced this *suspicion*, not for the sake of making any direct or formal remarks upon it, which I presume it can by no means deserve, but as what I look upon to be an ample

confession, in favor of the credibility of the gospel-history, from the pen of one who appears willing to have done his utmost towards invalidating its evidences. For his Lordship must needs have been greatly at a loss for allegations against it, when he could thus gravely urge a suspicion, which, if it be allowed the least degree of weight in the argument relative to the external evidences of Christianity, must immediately and infallibly undermine the faith of all history, and render all the valuable records of antiquity in every respect insignificant and worthless. For what one history have we now in our hands, which might not, as well as that of the gospel, be rejected by one apt to suspect, upon the footing of the very same suspicion? Or what single fact is there recorded in history, upon the truth of which we can have any dependance, if we are thus to indulge ourselves in suspecting that there *might* have been contradictory proofs, tho' no such proofs are any where apparent? Who can tell but that all the stories related in Livy, or in Tacitus *might* have been by some other ancient history, now unhappily lost, proved to be nothing else but a system of lies, and one continued series of falsehood and imposition? Nay, might not the same *suspicion* be with equal reason carried into all the affairs and transactions of the present time, of which we are not ourselves immediate witnesses, and thus a universal scepticism commence, as to all matters of fact, whether past, or present, such only excepted? What, at least, are we to think of Lord Bolingbroke's own *impartiality*, when he could suspect *time and accidents*, not to have been *impartial*, for no other reason, but because history supplies us with such a strong, concurring evidence in favor of christianity, and with no evidence against it? Of the same wild and extravagant nature is another maxim, upon the subject of historical evidence, advanced, p. 386. It is there asserted, that

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the truth of facts, however notorious, and even of those, which men have the least interest or temptation to falsify, is trusted very unsafely to tradition.

It is not oral, but written, historical tradition, that he means. And by this maxim he evidently rejects every test of historical credibility, and subverts the very basis and foundation of historical truth. Neither can we pass over the charge, which is advanced, p. 387. against the learned Dr. Barrow, for leaving

us in effect none but the writings of the evangelists, and the epistles of two or three apostles, who had been disciples, tho' he asserts that there are proper and sufficient means for discerning the genuine doctrines and dictates of Christianity.

So that it seems, that the four gospels, the acts of the apostles, thirteen or fourteen epistles of St. Paul, together with the writings of St. Peter and St. James, of St. Jude and St. John are not, according to his Lordship, sufficient to furnish us with a thorough knowledge of Christianity. And yet, when in another humour, the four gospels alone will serve his turn. Nay, he is pleased to tell us, p. 390. that

two channels were as sufficient as four to convey these doctrines, (*the doctrines of Christ*) to the world, and to preserve them in their original purity.

How effectually did he confute his own complaint of a *scantiness* in the external evidence of Christianity, when constrained to have recourse to such observations as these,

in order to keep up the air of an opposition to it! But we are told, p. 387, that

opinions and doctrines are more unsafely conveyed by tradition than facts.

The reasons upon which this remark is founded, seem to be in general as applicable to *facts* as to *opinions*. There are the same general inducements to *misrepresent* facts, as to falsify *opinions*. *Facts* are *disputed* as well as *opinions* or *doctrines*. All opinions are not *intricate*. And if there be a greater difficulty in ascertaining some than others, the case is the same with respect to the nature, circumstances and evidences of different facts. Accordingly we find by experience, that in history different and contradictory accounts are given of *facts*, as well as of *opinions*. But as we do not for this reason suppose the credibility of history to be, in the one case, destroyed, we cannot with any consistency urge it as an argument against its credibility in the other. Besides, what more natural or easy than for *disciples* to collect the opinions of their *master*, in the very words in which he delivered them? This has been often done: and it is not to be doubted, but that such collections were made by the apostles of Christ, during the time of their attendance upon him, and conversation with him. To this his peculiarly august and venerable character would be a peculiar motive. And we may well believe, that it was for the sake of making these collections with so much the greater exactness, as well as for other obvious purposes, that they sometimes desired him to resume in private, what had been the subject of his public discourse:

P. 272. He (*Dr. Conybear*) is too wise to attempt the shewing, that the scriptures (*of the New Testament*) we have, are attested copies of the originals.

I think he did attempt this. And every one, who defends

sends Christianity, every one, who believes the Christian religion to be true, believes the books, in which its doctrines and the miracles, by which they were confirmed, are recorded, to be *attested copies of the originals*. For he does not believe them to be *originals*; and yet, in consequence of his belief of Christianity, we must suppose him to believe, that there were authentic originals of these books, that is, that such books were actually written at the time they are said to have been written, and by persons capable of being sufficiently informed concerning the truth of the facts they relate. All the testimonies therefore, of history in proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament, he of course looks upon as so many proofs, that the books it contains are severally *attested copies* of their originals. The same we believe with relation to all other ancient books, which we deem to be genuine. We believe them to be *attested copies* of their respective *originals*; that is, copies transmitted down to us as *genuine and authentic*, upon the credible faith of history, and the concurrent testimony of preceding times. And this is the *attestation* so amply given to the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament Writings.

P. 281. How it happened I know not. Let divines tell that, or rather let us forbear to pry over curiously into the secret dispositions of providence. But so it has happened that the Christian religion has been attended with the same course of accidents as are common with it to every institution purely human.

That it should be *attended with the same course of accidents that are common with it to other institutions*, is not to be wondered at. But such tautological modes of expression are not unusual with his Lordship. We pass them over; and we allow the general fact here spoken of. But does it from hence follow,

low, that Christianity is an institution *purely human*? By no means: it only follows, that it was not the design of *Providence*, that it should be secured from such *accidents*. And is not every blessing enjoyed by mankind, even life itself, subject to accidents? But are we therefore to deny ourselves indebted to heaven for the possession of them? The particular *accidents*, which seem here to be referred to, are the different sentiments prevailing among Christians, and the partial influence of the Christian religion towards promoting a reformation of manners in the world. Of the former enough has been already said. When we consider indeed, as is observed by his Lordship, p. 282. that

No religion ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind; we may,

as he likewise expresses it, p. 289.

be allowed to wonder and to seek the reason, why the law of nature thus (*i. e. by Christianity*) enforced, has served so little to correct the manners of men, and to promote the peace and happiness of the world.

The perverseness of mankind upon many occasions excites our astonishment; and inquiries may be very usefully made into the *reasons* of it; since by this means we may learn the better, how it may be counter-acted or corrected. But such inquiries cannot, I think, any more invalidate the authority of Christianity, than of natural religion; which is so justly considered by his Lordship as a divine institution: since it is so apparent, that this latter has been very far from being compleatly effectual towards promoting an integrity

tegrity of manners and social happiness amongst mankind. Lord Bolingbroke is almost perpetually complaining of metaphysicians and divines for imagining how things might have been in the plan and order of providence, instead of taking them as they are. Yet this is exactly the method, which he himself pursues in his inquiries concerning the truth of the Christian religion. He frames to himself an arbitrary hypothesis. He takes it for granted, that an extraordinary and miraculous institution of religion must necessarily be designed to put an immediate, effectual, everlasting end to all variety of opinion, and even to the possibility of entertaining any corrupt notions or sentiments, upon the subject of religion; to all vice and iniquity, and to the very possibility of moral depravity in the human species. And because Christianity has not answered these imaginary purposes, it is rejected, as if it could not possibly have been of any service at all to mankind, and was utterly unworthy of being looked upon as an institution of divine authority. By the very same method of reasoning he might have become an atheist; and, because the human mind was not originally so framed as universally and infallibly to prevent men's falling into error and wickedness, have inferred, that God was not the creator of it; or because the human body was not so framed as to prevent diseases, and to be incapable of suffering by casualties and accidents, have denied that God was the framer and preserver of it. We must therefore conclude, that if Christianity be by the very nature and tendency of its laws and doctrines most admirably fitted and adapted, as in truth it is, to promote religious knowledge and the practice of virtue, this, in conjunction with its miraculous evidences, must be abundantly sufficient to justify us in looking upon it, as an institution of divine authority. I would only observe farther, that from the principles, which have here been laid down, we may easily infer the invalidity of that objection to the Mosaic oeconomy, which has been so much insisted upon by Lord Bolingbroke, and which is
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founded upon its imperfect influence towards correcting the errors and reforming the manners of the Jewish people.

P. 305. Christ himself was in outward appearance a Jew. He ordered his disciples and the crowds, that followed him, to observe and do whatever the scribes and pharisees, who sat in the chair of Moses, should direct.—He was a better Jew than they, and he exhorted others to be the same. It is true, that he commissioned his apostles to teach and baptize all nations, when he gave them his last instructions. But he meant no more, perhaps, by all nations, than the Jews dispersed into all nations, since he had before that time forbid them to go into the ways of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans.

So likewise, p. 328. note,

Christ professed Judaism, and declared himself sent to the Jews alone, and not even to the Samaritans, so positively, that when he commissioned his apostles, he may be, and to make him consistent, ought to be understood to have meant no more, than to send them to the Jews dispersed in all nations.

Once more, p. 391, 2.

The author of it (*Christianity*) was a Jew; and as the religion he instituted tended not directly to destroy Judaism, so the Christian church

church at Jerusalem conformed long, as Christ himself had done constantly, to the ancient religion.

The conclusion, which we may suppose his Lordship intended should be drawn from these observations, is this; either that none but Jews can be under any obligations to submit themselves to the authority of Christ, even tho' they should acknowledge him to be a divine prophet, since his commission extended to Jews alone, in the same manner as did that of Moses; or that, if any others think proper to own a submission to this authority, they must, by virtue of it, be obliged to *profess Judaism*, and to *conform* to that *ancient religion*. But let us consider, what ground there may be for the observations themselves. Now I think it very evident from the whole of the gospel-history, that Christ was so far from *professing Judaism*, or *conforming constantly* to that *ancient religion*; that he did, on the contrary, very sufficiently and clearly make it known, both by his doctrine and by his practice, that it was his design to abolish it. Several of his miraculous cures were performed upon the sabbath-day. And, upon every occasion of this kind, the Jews considered him as acting in direct violation of the Mosaic law, and in avowed contempt of it. Had he designed only, as his Lordship insinuates, p. 314, to *reform Judaism*, would he have given the Jews themselves such an unnecessary handle against him? Yet, so far was he from declining this practice, that he took every opportunity of justifying it in the most public manner. Once in particular, when the pharisees murmured at his disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, he assures them, that "the son of man is lord even of the " sabbath-day." The plain meaning of which is, that he had power and authority to abrogate and disannul the institution of the sabbath, and by parity of reason, every other institution peculiar to the Mosaic oeconomy. A declaration,

claration, which surely he would not have made, had it not been one part of his design in coming into the world, and appearing, as the messenger and prophet of God, actually to abolish them. On any other supposition, it was a declaration calculated to prejudice and exasperate the Jews against him, without answering any one valuable purpose whatsoever. Nor could any thing more strongly imply the intended abolition of Judaism by the gospel, than our Savior's assuring the woman of Samaria, that the "time was come, when men should worship God in spirit and in truth;" which, agreeably to the nature and purport of the question, to which these words are an answer, was plainly meant in opposition to the ritual and ceremonial worship, that was practised in the temple at Jerusalem, as well as in that on mount Gerizim, and which, he expressly informs her, was very soon to be set aside. And when the pharisees reviled the man, who had been born blind, but whose eyes Jesus had opened; by saying to him, "thou art his (i. e. Christ's) disciple, but we are Moses' disciples:" they plainly enough intimate, that according to their notion of our Savior's doctrine, and of the design of it, whoever became a disciple of Christ must of course cease to be a disciple of Moses. But Christ, we are told,

ordered his disciples and the crowds, that followed him, to observe and do whatever the scribes and pharisees, who sat in the chair of Moses, should direct.

He did so: but in the very same discourse addressed to the very same audience; and when speaking of the same scribes and pharisees, he calls them "blind guides," censuring some of their precepts and maxims as *absurd* and *ridiculous*. What then, in such a connection can we possibly suppose him to have meant, by ordering them to do the things, which these scribes and pharisees, should direct,

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but not to do their works, but this; that instead of being induced by their irregular conversation to indulge themselves in vices of the like kind, they should endeavour to fortify their own minds by such good and sound principles, as these established teachers might at any time inculcate, however inconsistently with their own practice, against the contagion of their example? And if our Savior *once* forbid his disciples to go into the cities of Samaria, it is plain, that the prohibition was only temporary, since he himself preached the gospel in Samaria, and so did the apostles after him: which surely they would not have done, had they not known it to have come within the extent of the commission he had given them to preach the "gospel to all nations." They preached it likewise to the Gentiles without any manner of exception or reserve. From whence it necessarily follows, that his Lordship's interpretation of the commission they received to preach the "gospel to all nations," by which he would confine it to the Jews scattered among all nations, must be a false and mistaken one; unless we suppose Lord Bolingbroke to have understood our Savior's meaning and intention in this commission better than the very persons to whom it was delivered.

P. 313. The gospel of Christ is one thing, the gospel of St. Paul, and of all those, who have grafted after him upon the same stock, is another.

This observation is partly founded upon those, which are contained in the passages, that have last been cited. If therefore it has been made sufficiently evident, that our Savior taught the abolition of the Mosaic law, as well as St. Paul, so far the assertion, that *the gospel of Christ is one thing and the gospel of St. Paul another*, must of course be

be invalidated. But it is farther alledged, p. 509, 10. that St. Paul taught the

doctrine of absolute predestination, of election and reprobation, and meant, *upon this subject*, just what Calvin supposed him to mean, and that Christ did not teach it, is certain.

And yet those, who believe this doctrine urge the authority of Christ, as well as of St. Paul. And I presume, that had his Lordship been so inclined, he could as easily have found this doctrine, in such passages as these; "All that
" the Father has given me, shall come unto me; I pray
" not for the world but for them, whom thou hast given
" me. Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as
" I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know
" them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eter-
" nal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any
" pluck them out of my hands; my Father, who gave
" them me is greater than all." Which are, all of them, the express declarations of our blessed Savior, as in many passages to be met with in the writings of St. Paul. We readily allow this doctrine of Calvin to be, as his Lordship expresses it, p. 508, 9, 10.

scandalously repugnant to the ideas of divine justice and goodness, impious, abominable, and of the utmost absurdity.

But we beg leave to say, that the gospel of Christ and of St. Paul is one thing; the gospel of St. Calvin, as he styles him, another. Still however, it is said, p. 331. that

St. Paul taught the doctrine of passive obedience, *which* would be sufficient to shake the credit

credit even of Christ's gospel, if it were contained in it.

This doctrine, however, seems to be as plainly taught by our Savior, when, he says, "resist not evil," as by any words of St. Paul. Tho' the truth of the matter is, that neither our Savior nor St. Paul can, without the most manifest absurdity, be said to have inculcated any such principle, since their own conduct was directly the reverse of it. The very preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles was one continued scene of opposition to the civil establishment of religion, and consequently to the authority of the civil magistrate. To suppose them therefore, in this very scene of conduct, to have preached the doctrine of *passive obedience*, or any of them to have done this, is to suppose them contradicting and condemning themselves, and defeating their own designs in a manner, that cannot, upon any consistent notions of their character, be thought possible. It is indeed insisted upon, p. 323. that

St. Paul calls the gospel he preached, my gospel; which expression he cannot be supposed to have used, says Mr. Locke in his note on the passage very justly, unless he knew, that what he preached had something in it, that distinguished it from what was preached by others.

But I see not the propriety or force of this criticism. Whatever doctrines a man believes, owns, and preaches, may surely be said with the utmost truth to be *his doctrines*, how exactly soever they may coincide with the doctrines advanced and inculcated by others. Are my sentiments and principles less *my own*, because they are the sentiments and principles of others besides myself? Let me add, that if the doctrine of St. Paul had differed so much from that of Christ and the rest of the apostles, as Lord Bolingbroke

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pretends

pretends it did, this difference must have been discerned by the enemies of Christianity. Nor could any thing have afforded them a more specious handle against it. Yet there is not the least appearance in history of their attempting to make any advantage of such a difference, in the opposition which they carried on, to the cause and interest of the gospel, or even that they knew of any such thing. But had it really subsisted, what could they have wished for, by which more effectually to blast and defeat all the measures that could possibly have been taken by the apostles to establish Christianity in the world?

Ibid. It is this (*that part of Christianity which consists of articles of faith*) that has added a motive the more, and one that is stronger than any other, to animosity and hatred, to wars and massacres, and to that cruel principle, which was never known till Christians introduced it into the world, to persecution for opinions often of the most abstract speculation, and of the least importance to civil or religious interests.

We shall by no means compliment this palpable and most enormous falshood, so far as to enter upon any particular confutation of it. A child might confute it. Besides, his Lordship tells us, p. 325. of some, whose *pertness, not to say impudence, deserves no regard*. We will therefore only leave the following passage to the readers animadversion, and to be applied, as he shall think proper.

It is common, (*his Lordship tells us, p. 295.*) and yet astonishing, to observe, with how much solemnity and confidence, almost all those, who teach and defend Christianity, pre-
sume

sume to affirm any thing, tho' never so evidently false, that they imagine may serve to recommend it.

P. 334. These men (*certain ancient heretics, of whom his Lordship had just been speaking*) had the Old Testament, and several gospels, and several apostolical epistles before them; for no canon of scripture was yet settled, nor till more than three centuries afterwards; tho' it may seem not a little extraordinary, that this should have been neglected, whilst the tradition, that could alone establish the authenticity of these writings, was fresh enough to be itself authentic. The writings, however, that passed all for authentic, in some or other of the Christian churches, these men had.

Again, p. 632.

I do indeed admit the gospels, not on the testimony of the Spirit, like Calvin, but on that of the fathers and doctors of the church, who not only bear this testimony separately; but assembled in a council at Laodicea, rejecting many other gospels made a canon of these.

By these and other passages of the like kind, Lord Bolingbroke would persuade his readers to believe, that the canon of the New Testament was not settled, till the council of Laodicea. With what view is sufficiently manifest from his observing, p. 570. that

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There is so great reason to suspect, that the spirit of party had as much to do in determining what books should be deemed canonical, as what doctrines should be deemed orthodox.

But with his Lordship's good leave, this canon had been settled long before this council of Laodicea, and even without the help of any council at all. For the state of this matter, cannot I think, be better represented, than in the words of the very learned M. Le Clerc. "Cum Joannes
 " reliquis apostolis superstes fuerit & ultimus evangelista-
 " rum dicta & facta Christi memoriae, ut diximus, man-
 " darit, dubium esse non videtur, quin ejus ævo quatuor e-
 " vangelia manibus Christianorum trita fuerint eandemque
 " auctoritatem obtinuerint, quam illis medio seculo secun-
 " do, Justini & Irenæi ævo, fuisse vidimus. Quare non
 " est cur ad sæculum secundum constitutionem canonis
 " evangelici rejiciamus, ut viri quidam docti facere amant.
 " Nusquam quidem legimus collegium apostolicum, aut
 " coetum ullum rectorum ecclesiarum Christianarum co-
 " actum esse, qui pro auctoritate definierint hunc nume-
 " rum evangeliorum esse admittendum non majorem nec
 " minorem; sed *nec opus fuit*, cum omnibus constaret ex
 " testimonio & consensu aequalium, quatuor haec evan-
 " gelia eorum vere fuisse, quorum nomina praeferunt, &c.
 " Idem dixerimus de epistolis apostolicis, quae *nullius ec-*
 " *clesiastici conventus* judicio sed *constanti* omnium Christia-
 " norum testimonio, rebusque ipsis, quas complectuntur,
 " auctoritatem omnem suam debent." Cleric. Ecclesiast.
 Hist. Ann. c. 8. § 3, 4. p. 520. The sense of which pas-
 sage may be thus expressed. "As St. John survived the
 " rest of the apostles, and was the last of the evangelists,
 " who recorded the doctrines and works of Christ, it
 " seems to be beyond dispute, that in his time the four
 " gospels were in common use among Christians, and had
 " then obtained the same authority, which we so certainly
 " know

“ know to have been ascribed to them in the middle of the
“ second century, in the time of Justin and Irenæus. So
“ that there seems to be no occasion for reducing, as has
“ been done by some learned men, the settlement of the
“ evangelical canon so low, as to the second century.
“ And, in truth, we read not of any apostolical council,
“ or of any assembly of those, who presided in the Chri-
“ stian churches, who then determined by their own par-
“ ticular authority, that such a number of gospels, nei-
“ ther more nor fewer, should be received. Nor was
“ there a necessity for any thing of this kind; since it so
“ evidently appeared from the testimony and common con-
“ sent of their cotemporaries, that the four gospels were the
“ genuine and authentic writings of those whose names they
“ bear. The same is to be said of the apostolical epistles,
“ which owe all their genuineness and authority, not to
“ the determination of any particular ecclesiastical assem-
“ bly, but to the constant testimony of all Christians, and
“ to the very nature of the subjects, of which they treat.”
Lord Bolingbroke therefore was intirely mistaken, when he
supposed the settling of the

New Testament canon to have been neglected,
whilst the tradition, that could alone establish
the authenticity of these writings, was fresh
enough to be itself authentic.

For it was by this very authentic tradition bearing date
from the apostolic age itself, that this canon was in fact
settled, and not by this or that particular council. The
council of Laodicea did not by inserting the canon of the
New Testament among their decrees settle that canon;
but they inserted it among their decrees, because it had be-
fore been settled by the unanimous voice of authentic tra-
dition.

P. 399. They (*the first Christians be means*) composed a multitude of different gospels, not less, I believe, than forty, to give the authority of a divine original to all the fabulous traditions, superstitious practices, and extravagant doctrines, which were adopted or invented by the different sects. Thus the Gnostics had their gospel; the Marcionites had theirs, the Valentinians had theirs; and even Judas Iscariot had his.

So again, p. 404.

Let it be, that the gospels received into the canon are favorable to the orthodox belief, (*i. e. with relation to the doctrine of the Trinity*) how do we know that the other gospels were exactly conformable to these, on a matter of so much nice definition?

And p. 459.

Various gospels, various epistles were current. They were all received, in some of the churches at least. What they contained, that are not come down to us, we know not.

Once more, p. 493.

There were various gospels, and various epistles. All these were composed and altered, received or rejected, according to the different traditions
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and the different systems of evangelical history and doctrine, that prevailed in different places and among different persons.

Scarce can any thing be more captious or unreasonable than that objection against the validity and authenticity of the New Testament writings, which these passages contain. History is not accountable for the frauds and impositions of mankind. It is enough, if it enables us to detect them. What can the most authentic tradition do more? And that this has been really done by ecclesiastical history, and the tradition of the Christian church is sufficiently evident from the very objection itself. For how else could his Lordship have been furnished with it? He complains of forged gospels and forged epistles. How came he to know, that there were any such, or which were they, but from the testimony of the church, and of those, who being best able to judge, whether the writings in question were genuine or suppositious, have stamped the mark of forgery upon them? But then we have other gospels and other epistles, which by the very same tradition, and by the very same persons have been stamped with the mark of truth. And can any thing be more perverse or preposterous, than to depend upon the credibility of Christian history, when it informs us of forged and spurious books, and to reject its authority, when it informs us of such, as are genuine? The forged books had the fate of such; to be discovered and to be transmitted as such to posterity. But then there are other books giving an account of the evangelical history and doctrine, which had before been looked upon as genuine, and which still continued, notwithstanding the detection of these forgeries, to be considered in the same light. These are the books of the New Testament. This detection brought no suspicion upon them, and for that very reason has confirmed their authenticity. So that we have the

same authority for receiving the gospels and epistles bearing the name of the evangelists and apostles, and by Christians generally ascribed to them for genuine, as we have for looking upon these other gospels and epistles as false and spurious. And to reject the gospels and epistles of the New Testament, as suppositious, would be an absurdity at least as great as to receive the forgeries referred to for genuine and authentic. That these forgeries should indeed be at first received for genuine by some or other among the different sects of professing Christians, or that some or other among these different sects should at least pretend to receive them as such, is not at all to be wondered at. This last must necessarily be supposed with respect to those who were concerned in the forgery. And they would scarce have been concerned in it, if they had not been pretty well assured, that there were others credulous or bigotted enough to be easily imposed upon. And if this be all that his Lordship meant by saying, that *they were all received in some of the Christian churches at least*; if by this he meant no more, than that some of them were received by some professing Christians, and some of them by others; and that thus *all of them* met with some degree of reception in the Christian world, we have nothing to alledge against the observation. But if he intended to insinuate, that there was any one church, that received them all, the insinuation is sufficiently confuted by his own account of the matter. For he tells us, as we have seen,

that these gospels were received or rejected according to the different traditions and the different systems of evangelical history and doctrine that prevailed in different places, and among different persons.

Let it however be observed, that forged gospels and forged epistles in the strongest manner imply some real gospels,

gospels, some real epistles, which they were intended to counterfeit. And which shall we receive for real, but those, which the clear, constant, uniform testimony of historical tradition has declared to be so?

P. 422. Less than the whole would not satisfy the church: and St. Peter accuses them (*Ananias and Sapphira*) accordingly of fraud, and of lying to the Holy Ghost; because they had given no more than they could spare, and had owned no more than they had given.

According to the real story here referred to, as related in the book of Acts, St. Peter was so far from *accusing* them, *because they had given no more than they could spare*, and from being *unsatisfied with less than the whole*, that he did not require their giving anything at all. This is what his own words immediately and necessarily imply. For thus he speaks to Ananias. "Whist it remained, was it not 'thine own?' and when it was sold, was it not in thine power? Nay this is what Lord Bolingbroke himself had just before been observing.

They might have kept their estate, *he says, ibid.* or the whole price they had sold it for.

He adds indeed;

but when they brought it, in imitation of the zeal of other Christians, to the apostolical chamber or treasury, it became a fraud to keep back any part of it.

A fraud, which might very well have been excused, had they been cunning enough to have acted, as his Lordship here supposes them to have acted, and to bring in *it*, that
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is, the whole, and yet to keep back a part of it. But tho' they were not guilty of this imaginary fraud, a real one is very apparent in their conduct. And St. Peter accordingly blames them, not *for owning no more than they had given*, but for pretending to give more, than in fact they did give; and thus imposing themselves upon the Christian community as persons, who had thrown in their whole substance to the common stock, when, in truth, they had not done this; but reserved a part of it, for their own separate and private use.

P. 452. He (*St. Paul*) entered a volunteer into the apostleship. At least his extraordinary vocation was known to none but himself.

This *at least* is what Lord Bolingbroke is pleased to assert. But by looking into the history, from which only he could know any thing at all of this conversion, we find it recorded, as clearly and as expressly, as any other circumstance whatsoever relating to it, that there were persons *journeying with him* at the very time, when the miracle, which gave the more immediate occasion to it, was wrought. They appear to have been persons, who set out with him from Damascus with the same intent, that he had, of persecuting the Christian brethren at Jerusalem. Nothing was more easy than for the enemies of Christianity, or for those among the converts to it, who might entertain any suspicion of the reality of this conversion, to have applied to these persons for information concerning the truth of the miracle, which attended it. Nothing can be more natural than to suppose, that in fact they did so; since it appears from the public manner, in which this apostle spoke of it at Jerusalem, that he was by no means backward to assert it. If these persons did themselves become converts to Christianity at the same time with St. Paul, they sufficiently owned the truth of this miracle. But let us suppose they
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still continued disbelievers. This might possibly be the case, even tho' they could not deny the truth of the facts related by St. Paul with respect to his own conversion. For we find that, during the time of our Savior's personal ministry upon earth, there were great numbers among the Jews, who, tho' they could not pretend to deny his miracles, so far as relates to the facts themselves, did yet, by some means or another, evade the conviction so directly and immediately resulting from them in favor of the divinity of his mission. But had these men, who journeyed with St. Paul known the miracle he reported, and of which he affirmed that they were witnesses, to be a fiction, was it not in their power at once to have blasted his credit, and with it, in all probability, the credit of the gospel itself? So, that there are, in truth, all the same circumstances of notoriety and of credibility attending the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, as there are attending any other particular narrative of the gospel history.

P. 463. This eternal, this infinite Being, was represented in their histories (*the Jewish histories*) and in the whole system of their religion, as a local, tutelar deity, carried about in a trunk, or residing in a temple.

That many of the Jews might entertain very low and groveling apprehensions concerning the supreme Deity, and even some such as are here referred to, is not to be disputed. That they really did, appears from their histories to be more than probable. Yet it is remarkable, that Solomon, at the very time of his dedication of the temple, seems purposely to have guarded against any such notions, as might be thought to imply the confinement or limitation of the Deity to this or that particular place. " Behold, he says in his solemn address to God upon that occasion, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how

“how much less this house, which I have built.” Nor is there any where to be met with more exalted descriptions of the omnipresence, immensity, and universal dominion of God, than in the writings of the Jewish psalmist. Witness the following passages. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they who dwell therein.” The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.” From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord’s name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.” Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thine hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say; surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” And so far was Moses, the Jewish legislator, from representing *the infinite and all-perfect Being, as a local, tutelar Deity*, that, on the direct contrary, it was one of the most fundamental articles of his religion, that, in fact, there was no local deity at all, but that the same God, who was the God of the Jews, was also the God of all other nations; or, (which amounts exactly to the same thing) that there was but one God. “Hear, O Israel, he says, addressing himself in the most solemn manner, to the Israelitish people, the Lord thy God is one Lord.” An expression, the very intention of which was to assure them, that they were not to look upon the God, whom they worshipped as being their God exclusively, but as the common and universal parent. And to the same purpose he again addresses himself unto them, and with the same solemnity, telling them, Deut x. 17. “Behold, the hea-

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“ ven of heavens is the Lord’s, thy God ; the earth and
“ all that therein is.”

P. 485. Such tales as these (*the tales relating to Simon Magus and Montanus*) would not deserve to be mentioned, if they did not serve to shew the fanatical spirit of those ages, and to take off our wonder at all the heresies, that arose in the Christian church, by observing how easy it was to suppose a divine mission, or even to assume in opinion a divine nature.

Such *suppositions* and *assumptions* are indeed very easily made: yet have those, which his Lordship particularly refers to, been long since detected and exposed, nothing but the mere tradition of them remaining. But is this the case with respect to Christianity? And whence this grand difference in the effect, but from an equal difference in the original claims? It is an *easy* matter to make such claims; but it is *no easy matter* to support their credit for any long continuance of time without a foundation in truth. And this is what the fate of the several pretended *missions* and claims to a *divine nature* referred to sufficiently evince.

P. 537. It may seem strange, that he (*Jesus*) could conceal himself (*i. e. as the Messiah*) notwithstanding the signs and wonders that illustrated his birth, the proclamation of him from above at the time of his baptism, and all the miracles, which he wrought, chiefly indeed out of Jerusalem, during the time of his ministry.

This would indeed appear very *strange*, were it true. But it is not true, that he did conceal himself, that is, conceal
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his character, as the Messiah. Nor is it true, as his Lordship would persuade us to believe, that he studied to do it. That he did not study to do this, the miracles he wrought in so public a manner, and the public appeal he made to them is the most incontestable proof. For had he been desirous of concealing himself, nothing could have more effectually answered that end, than his not working any miracles at all. If upon some occasions he declined to speak of himself, in express terms, as being the Messiah, this was not owing to any intention he had of concealing that character; but, on the contrary, the very reason of this caution was, that by not exposing himself unnecessarily to the rage and malice of his enemies, he might protract his opportunity of working those miracles, of preaching that doctrine, and of exhibiting that example, which were the most convincing proofs of it. But tho' upon extraordinary occasions, and for reasons founded upon peculiar circumstances, our blessed Savior thought it prudent to be thus reserved and cautious, yet nothing can be plainer, than that his common stile and usual manner of speaking, both of himself and of his doctrine, was such, as very fully and clearly to express his claim to the character of a divine prophet, or, which is the same thing, to that of the Messiah. Of himself, in his most public discourses, he speaks, as one, whom "God the Father has sealed;" as one who "came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; as one who "spake to the world those things, "which he had heard of the father." And to an assembly of the principal and leading men among the Jews, met on purpose to inquire into his claims, and if possible to invalidate them, he thus addresses himself. "I have a "greater witness than that of John; for the works, which "the Father has given me to finish, the same works bear "witness of me, that the Father has sent me, and the Father, who has sent me, beareth witness of me — and ye "have not his word abiding in you; for whom he had
"sent

“sent, him you believe not. Search the scriptures; for in
“them you think you have eternal life, and they are they,
“which testify of me — Had ye believed Moses, ye
“would have believed me; for he wrote of me.” Could
any words more clearly than these express a claim to the
prophetical character, and even to that of the Messiah,
spoken of and foretold by the ancient prophets? In the
tenth chapter of St. John’s gospel, we are told likewise,
that “Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch:
“then came the Jews round about him, and said unto
“him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou
“be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I
“told you, and you believed not; the works that I do,
“they bear witness of me.” Of his doctrine he speaks,
as being “not his own, but his that sent him.” “I have
not, says he, (addressing himself to the Jews, on occasion
of the miracle he had wrought in the resurrection of Laza-
rus, “I have not spoken of myself; but the Father, who
“sent me, he gave me commandment, what I should say,
“and what I should speak: and I know that his com-
“mandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak there-
“fore, even as the Father had said unto me, so I speak.”
A multitude of other passages to the same purpose might
with ease have been produced. The notion therefore so
much insisted upon by Mr. Locke in his Reasonableness of
Christianity, and here adopted by Lord Bolingbroke, of
“our Savior’s not declaring himself in the whole course
“of his ministry, so much as to his disciples, much
“less to the multitude, or to the rulers of the Jews,
“in express words to be the Messiah, the king,”
is directly contrary to the whole tenor of the evan-
gelical writings, unless by “express words” we are
to understand the “express words” of Mr. Locke. For
that he had plainly told the Jews, that he was the Christ,
he himself affirms in a passage that has just now been cited
and in full, immediate answer to a demand or request
made, that he would plainly tell them, whether he was
really

really the Christ or not. He did not indeed declare himself to be a temporal king, as the Jews supposed he would have done, had he been the true Messiah; and that for this very plain reason, because he did not come into the world with any design of being a temporal king. But of that spiritual kingdom, which it was the real intention of his appearance to promote amongst men, and of the authority with which he was invested in it, he spake in terms the clearest and most express, representing the nature, spirit, and great design of it under the direct notion of a kingdom, of the kingdom of heaven, of the kingdom of God. With reference to this kingdom, he declared in the most public manner, that "all things were delivered to him of the father; that all judgment was committed to him, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father, and, that he had authority given him to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man." And that our Savior had not only proved his claim to the Messiahship by his life, doctrine and miracles, but likewise publicly and in express words asserted it, even previously to his accusation before Pilate, is absolutely undeniable; since the very accusation itself that was brought against him by the Jews before that governor, was his "saying that he himself is Christ, a king." Luke xxiii. 3.

But it is farther alleged, that

Most of our Savior's miracles were wrought out of Jerusalem.

This likewise is an observation of Mr. Locke's; and so far as relates to the miracles, that are particularly recorded in the gospels, it is a true one. Thus I express myself, because St. John, ch. ii. ver. 23. speaks of *other miracles*, that were wrought by our Savior at Jerusalem, besides
those

those, which have been distinctly related by the evangelists. To obviate however more fully any objection, that may seem to arise from this undoubted fact, let it be remembered, that so many of those, that are particularly specified, were wrought in or near Jerusalem, as might be sufficient to prevent any suspicion, that the rest were wrought at a distance from that city with a design of screening them from examination. Nevertheless, this circumstance would, in all probability, excite the jealousy of his enemies then residing at Jerusalem, concerning the truth of these miracles wrought in other parts of their country. But then what would be the consequence of this? Undoubtedly their making a stricter and more cautious inquiry upon that head. And if the result had been their discovering any fraud, artifice, or delusion in the case, our Savior's claim to the prophetic character must have been stifled in its very birth, nor would it ever more have been heard of in any other light, than as a known, detected imposture. Yet so directly contrary has been the real event, that we do not find in history the least appearance of any objection, that was ever made by the Jews of our Savior's time, to the notoriety or reality of his miracles. Those of Jerusalem did not any more than others, pretend to deny the truth of them, or to alledge, that they were not sufficiently public.

P. 547. St. Paul, who had not probably ever seen Jesus, deserves no credit, when he affirms, against the whole tenor of the gospels, that he and above five hundred brethren at once had seen him after his resurrection.

To make him less deserving of credit, his Lordship has thought proper to represent him as affirming, that he himself was in company with that assembly of Christian bre-

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thren

thren amounting to above five hundred, who saw our Savior at once after his resurrection; which would indeed be contrary to the account that is given us of his later conversion. But what St. Paul really affirms upon this head, is perfectly consistent with it. For in that very part of his writings referred to, namely the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, at the beginning he distinguishes as clearly as possible his own vision of Christ from that of the five hundred brethren expressly mentioning it as a later event. "After that, (that is, after he had been
five / "seen of above hundred brethren at once,) he was seen of "James, then of all the apostles (*a second time*)" He adds, "and last of all he was seen of me also," referring to the miraculous vision of Christ, which attended his conversion, and not to any personal interview, that he had ever had with our blessed Redeemer. And that 500 brethren should have seen our Savior at once after his resurrection does not, as far as I can find, contradict any thing, that is contained in the account given us of that event by the evangelists, unless every circumstance of an historical fact mentioned by one relator of the general fact, and not by another, must be deemed a contradictory one; which is a rule, not observed with respect to any other history, and therefore cannot, without manifest partiality, be established as a criterion of credibility in the case of an evangelical writer. And, to make such a criterion universal, would be giving up one of the chief advantages arising from having the history of a general fact related by different authors; which is, that by comparing all together, we may acquire a more exact knowledge of its circumstances, than we could have collected from any one of them apart. When indeed this or that particular circumstance, relating to some historical fact, or event, is first mentioned by one, who wrote a considerable time after the fact or event referred to took place, there may be very good reason for suspecting the truth of such a circumstance, unless the writer appears

to have had some peculiar opportunity of gaining from authentic memorials by him first discovered, a more exact information concerning it. But St. Paul was a cotemporary writer; and tho' not a disciple of Christ at the time of his resurrection, had it fully in his power to be informed of every thing relating to it.

P. 601. If the dissensions of Christian congregations (*i. e. during the apostolic age; for of that his Lordship is here speaking*) were such, as did not break out to the eyes of the heathens, all was strife and contention within.

This is an observation that confutes itself. For if *all was strife and contention within*, it is impossible, but that this must have discovered itself to the *eyes of the heathens*. Or, are we to suppose the primitive Christians to have been a kind of fairy creatures, who, by the aid of enchantments and magic circles, could, whenever they had a mind to it, be conversible to all human sight?

P. 630, 1. To make government effectual to all the good purposes of it, there must be a religion, this religion must be national; and this national religion must be maintained in reputation and reverence; all other religions, or sects, must be kept too low to become the rivals of it. These are in my apprehension first principles of good policy. The parliament of one thousand six hundred and forty one declared, that human laws cannot bind conscience, which is a declaration every sect makes out of power, and none observe willingly in it. But be it so. Human

laws, however, may and ought to exclude those men from power in the state, kings especially, who profess a private conscience repugnant to the public conscience of that state—The wisdom of our constitution has therefore joined admirably well together, the two most compatible things in the world, how incompatible soever they may have been represented, a test and a toleration.

Here we have his Lordship's inconsistent, absurd, and miserable expedient for *curing* the evils arising, (and many evils he tells us do arise,) from different opinions subsisting among Christians. It is an inconsistent account. For to what purpose all his exclamations against human, ecclesiastical authority in matters of religion, when he himself thus erects a national, public conscience, to which all other consciences are to bow down, and even the private consciences of kings to be subjected? Can such a national, public conscience subsist, without an invasion made upon the natural right of private judgment? And if this right be really and in fact invaded, what does it signify, whether the invader be called an ecclesiastic or a politician, a priest or a magistrate? The case is certainly the same, if what his Lordship tells us, p. 488, be true. For thus he expresses himself.

What revelation leaves a mystery, must remain such. And there cannot be a greater absurdity than to imagine, that human authority, "call it how you please," ought to determine, or will determine to submission, those who think such definitions (*authorised definitions*) are not conformable

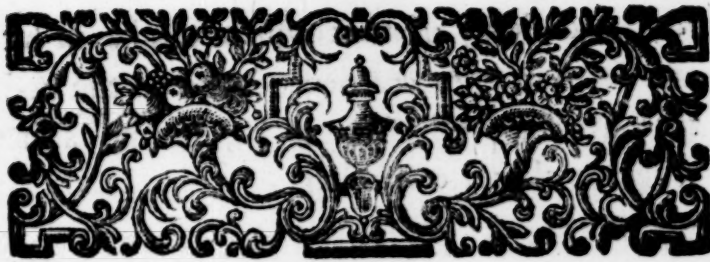
formable to their true criterion, which is the revelation itself.

That a *test* and a *toleration* are *compatible*, is very readily allowed, and was, I believe, never disputed. But there are different tests; and there are different degrees of toleration. And the dispute is not, whether the test his Lordship refers to, be compatible with any degree of toleration at all, but with that full and perfect toleration, or as it would be more justly expressed, with that full and perfect liberty, which dutiful and loyal subjects have an undoubted claim to, whatever may be their erroneous opinions in matters of faith or worship. To make the test referred to *compatible* with such a toleration as this, is utterly impossible. And to represent it as an *admirable* stroke of political *wisdom* to reconcile a test depriving men of certain natural rights and liberties, with a toleration implying that very deprivation, is most ridiculously absurd. And after all what are the evils proposed to be cured by this national test and public conscience? Why truly, such evils as, according to the very nature of them, cannot be cured by these expedients; the evils arising from different opinions in religion. Now these are, and can be only error, and the natural consequences of it in some or other of the dissentients. But can error be removed, or its consequences prevented by the expedient of a public conscience? Is it not as likely to establish error as to remove it? Nay, is it not certain, that, wherever it does or has prevailed, it does and ever has established error instead of truth. Had we not reason then to call this a miserable and absurd expedient, which proposes to cure evils that cannot possibly be cured by it? For error, I say it again, and its consequences, are the only evils, that can possibly arise from different opinions in religion. But if a man be hurt in his property on account of the opinions he entertains concerning religion, different from the opinions entertained or professed by any other

man, or any body of men concerning the same ; if by some national test he be on that account deprived of any of the privileges belonging to dutiful and loyal members of the public community ; if persons differing in their religious opinions, endeavor to kill and destroy one another, if numbers actually succeed in this execrable attempt, these evils are not to be imputed to the difference of opinion ; nor are they at all the consequence of speculative error, but flow intirely from the bad temper, the oppressive spirit, the arbitrary and tyrannical claims of one or other of the differing parties. And these are evils not to be cured by a national test or a public conscience, but by the effectual prevalence of that law of love, which our blessed Savior and his apostles have so strictly enjoined. Nothing can possibly be more evident, than that universal freedom of inquiry, accompanied with universal candor and moderation, notwithstanding the widest difference of opinion, that such an unlimited freedom of inquiry may occasion, is the true system of Christianity upon this article. Whatever schemes or systems therefore have any tendency to obstruct this freedom of inquiry, or to stop the flow of this universal benevolence, by injuring any one in the least degree merely on account of his religious opinions, whether it be called a system of ecclesiastical or of civil polity, is manifestly repugnant to the principles and spirit of the gospel, and ought therefore to be zealously and firmly protested against by all, who would be thought to contend in sincerity of heart and soundness of judgment, for the "faith once delivered to the saints," the primitive and uncorrupted doctrine of Jesus Christ.

End of the Second Part.

N O T E S



N O T E S

ON THE

Philosophical WRITINGS

OF

Lord *BOLINGBROKE*.

PART III.



THE fifth volume of Lord Bolingbroke's works contains a variety of what his Lordship calls *fragments, or minutes of essays*. The subjects they treat of do all of them fall within the compass of our original design. Upon these therefore we now propose to make some brief remarks, in the same method as before.

P. 40. Every man has reason to suspect, from the natural imperfections, from the accidental infirmities, from the sensible growth, matu-

rity, and decay of that which thinks in him, and from its apparent dependance on the body, that his soul, whatever it be, has no affinity with the all-perfect Being.

As for the *decay* of the thinking faculty, and its *dependance* upon the *body*, these have been already considered. But to infer from the *imperfections* and infirmities of the human mind, that there can be no *affinity* between it and the *all-perfect Being*, appears to be a very inconclusive mode of reasoning. It plainly confounds likeness and equality. The human soul, notwithstanding its *imperfections*, may resemble the Deity, by some general, yet faint analogy, in its powers and faculties, to the *all-perfect* attributes of the divine nature; tho' still the difference between created excellency, be it ever so exalted, and that which is supreme and uncreated, must needs be infinite. But if the imperfection of created intelligences necessarily implies, that they can have no sort of affinity with the *all-perfect Being*, this amounts to an assertion, that the omnipotence of the Deity cannot produce a creature, that shall bear the least resemblance of himself. Which must surely be a most absurd and arbitrary limitation of the divine power. And if the creation of such beings be possible, as it certainly must, what can be more agreeable to that infinite goodness, which we ascribe to the supreme Deity, than to suppose that he has brought into being an immense variety of creatures, bearing, some in a greater, some in a less degree, the image of his own perfections, and thus made capable of enjoying the sublimest happiness, that it is possible creatures should attain to. His Lordship indeed tells us, vol. iv. p. 152.

That the taking our thoughts off from the sensible connection between us and other animals, and applying them to an imaginary connection
between

between the divine and human nature, tends to lessen our admiration and adoration of the supreme Being, or, at least, the humiliation of ourselves.

And yet I think it very evident, that the denying any *affinity* between the human soul and the *all-perfect* Being, is necessarily attended with the utmost disparagement of the divine perfections, and does indeed virtually, or by supposition destroy them. For, it is certain in fact, that man is a being endowed with intellectual and moral faculties, by which he is capable of making some very considerable improvements in knowledge and wisdom, in virtue and benevolence. To say therefore, that there is no similarity or *cognition* at all between the human soul and the divine Being, is, in effect, to deny, that knowledge, wisdom, and benevolence, are attributes of the supreme Divinity. For, if they are, then such a similarity must needs subsist. And so long as we devoutly and fervently acknowledge ourselves to be intirely and absolutely indebted to the sovereign and most beneficent Creator for every mental power and faculty which we enjoy, and for every advance we make towards the full dignity and perfection of our natures, honorable and exalted ideas of our own being, can never be inconsistent with a true and genuine *humility*, and will, at the same time, as must be sufficiently evident, contribute far more to raise and enliven our pious adoration, than those gross, contemptible notions of human nature, which his Lordship is so extremely solicitous to propagate and instil. Such however being the sentiments he so much insists upon, it is no wonder he should farther express himself as follows.

P. 62. I confess, and think myself obliged in conscience to confess, that I hold it to be absurd,

furd, and worfe than absurd, to assert, that man can imitate God, except in a sense so very remote, and so improper, that the expression should never be used ; and much less such a duty be recommended.

That is ; his Lordship holds it to be *absurd, and worfe than absurd*, to assert, that a thing can be done, which every day, and in cases innumerable, actually is done. For if God be a benevolent Being, and there are any benevolent actions performed amongst mankind, all these actions must necessarily, in the very nature of them, be an *imitation* of God. It is true, that, let human benevolence be ever so sublime and exalted, there is still, and to all eternity will be, an infinite distance and disparity of degree between this human benevolence, and that which is divine. But it is as true likewise, and self-evident, that just so far as any human creature acts upon a principle of benevolence, so far he does in a strict and *proper* sense resemble or imitate God. He therefore, who *recommends* the duty of benevolence, does of course recommend the duty of imitating God. And whenever human duty is inculcated as an imitation of God, it is plain, that this conformity to the divine benevolence, in the principles and motives of our actions, is the thing intended, and not any conformity in the formal nature, or peculiar quality of the actions themselves, to the operations of divine providence. So that there is manifestly nothing that can invalidate the propriety of inculcating this duty in what is alleged, p. 63.

That in many cases we should act in direct contradiction to the law of our nature, if we made the conduct of divine providence the rule of ours.

It

It may not, however, be amiss to consider, in a word or two, the particular illustrations, which he has given us of this remark.

God, (*he says, ibid.*) makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust.

And where can be the harm of infering from hence, our obligation to the *love of our enemies*, or, in other words, to the having a sincere good-will and compassion towards them, even supposing them to be men of worthless and profligate characters? How much soever his Lordship might be inclined to object to this duty as being too

Sublime, and not practicable in the general society of mankind. (*See Vol. IV. p. 298, 9.*)

It is necessarily comprehended in that universal law of benevolence for which he contends. And what impropriety can there be in recommending and enforcing it by the authority and amiableness of the divine example? But

God, (*we are told, ibid.*) involves the innocent with the guilty in great calamities.

This, in many instances, is indeed apparent: but whoever believes the perfection of divine providence must believe, that this part of it is a measure designed to subserve the purposes of infinite benevolence, how little soever we may be able to discern the manner, in which it does so, and that had it not been for its tendency to promote such purposes, it would not have made a part of it. An obvious lesson therefore to be collected even from these particular dispensations of divine providence is, that we are not in any of our measures to *involve the innocent with the guilty*, unless it be with a view, and sincere intention of promoting some
pre-

prepollent good. And that cases do frequently occur even in the course of human transactions, wherein the law of universal benevolence requires, that we should involve the *innocent with the guilty in great calamities*, is undeniable. For of this nature are all those punishments, which are necessarily and usefully inflicted upon such, as have been guilty of atrocious offences against the public good; even tho' by this means their innocent families are thrown into the deepest poverty and distress. But

To what actions, (*it is asked, p. 89, 90.*) of the divinity can we apply, or from what can we deduce our notions of human justice? How shall we deduce fortitude from the attributes of God, or ascribe this virtue to him, who can endure no pain, nor be exposed to any danger? How temperance, when it would be the most horrid blasphemy to suppose him subject to any human appetites and passions, and much more to some so inordinate, as to require a particular virtue to restrain and govern them?

But notwithstanding these queries, we may still maintain, that human justice, and the virtues of temperance and fortitude, are easily to be deduced from the moral attributes of God. For as benevolence, universal benevolence is the law of nature, so justice, temperance and fortitude, are the laws of benevolence. They have more over such an immediate, necessary, perpetual and important influence upon the welfare and happiness of society, as to stand in close and inseparable connection with it, and to constitute some of its primary and most essential obligations. If therefore it be our duty to imitate the benevolence of the Deity, we
must

must from thence immediately deduce our obligations to *justice, temperance, and fortitude*, even tho' the *idea* of that *justice*, which is exercised between man and man, *cannot be applied to the Divinity*, tho' he cannot endure pain, or be exposed to any danger, and tho' it would be the most horrid blasphemy to suppose him subject to any human appetites or passions. Nay, it is apparent, that justice, fortitude, and temperance, tho' in the highest degree useful to society, from whatever principles they may flow in the conduct of particular persons, yet do not implicate any real excellence or worth of character, farther than they spring from the dictates and sentiments of benevolence. Caesar's character is not, as I presume, thought to be at all more amiable, on account of that well known saying of Cato: "*Unum ex omnibus Caesarum ad evertendam rempublicam socium accessisse.*" The consideration therefore of human duty, as consisting in an imitation of the divine benevolence, furnishes every man with a criterion, by which he may easily decide upon the real and intrinsic merit of his own character, without being biased or corrupted in his judgment of it by the speciousness of its appearance to the public eye.

P. 80. There is a sort of genealogy of law, in which nature begets natural law, natural law sociability, sociability union of societies by consent, and this union by consent the obligation of civil laws. When I make sociability the daughter of natural law, and the grand-daughter of nature, I mean plainly this. Self-love, the original spring of human actions, directs us necessarily to sociability.

P. 106. When God made man, he made a creature, the happiness of whose being depended on his sociability with animals of his own species. He made him therefore a sociable animal, an animal capable of feeling the immediate pleasure and advantage of society.

P. 115. We have a natural sociability, that is, we are determined by self-love to seek our pleasure and our utility in society, as it has been said; but when these ends are once sufficiently answered, natural sociability declines, and natural insociability commences. The influence of self-love reaches no farther. Societies become in all respects individuals, that is, they have no regard to others, except relatively to themselves; and self-love, that promoted union among men, promotes discord among them.

Once more, p. 384, 5.

We are designed to be social, not solitary creatures. Mutual wants unite us; and natural benevolence and political order, upon which our happiness depend, are founded in them. This is the law of our nature — A due use of our reason makes social and self-love coincide, or even become in effect the same. — As our parents loved themselves in us, so we love ourselves in our children, and in those to whom we are most nearly related by blood. Reason improves it farther. We love
our-

ourselves in our neighbors, and in our friends too, with Tully's leave; for if friendship is formed by a kind of sympathy, it is cultivated by good offices. Reason proceeds. We love ourselves in loving the political body, whose members we are, and we love ourselves, when we extend our benevolence to all mankind.

After the specimens that have been already given of Lord Bolingbroke's strong and vehement inclination to represent the human nature in the most contemptible and debasing light; we cannot be at all surprized at this genealogical table, so curiously and exactly traced, of all the social, generous, and tender affections belonging to the mind of man, or at his great dexterity in making self-love to be the common root and mother of them all. The very exhibition of such a table, is enough to expose the absurdity of it. Let the following reflections however be added. It is true, that self-love may be, and that, in the wise and admirable formation of our natures, it actually is, made to be, in the highest degree, aiding and assisting to the principle of benevolence. But then this supposes the distinct and separate existence, of the benevolent, as well as of the selfish principle. They may co-exist in the same mind. But that self-love should be the parent, spring, and origin of benevolence, is as absurd to imagine, as it would be to imagine, that seeing should produce smelling or hearing; or that hearing should ever have produced speech in one who was without a tongue. Self-love indeed may dispose men, when they come to observe their *mutual* and necessary dependance to do good offices to their fellow-creatures, upon the condition either tacit or express of having others done for themselves in return. This however, is mere buying and selling, and can no more be called benevolence, than any other profitable trade or merchandize.

The

The very word, benevolence, expresses good-will to mankind, independent of any regard to our own interest or happiness : so that if his Lordship's notions be just, if there be in reality no such distinct principle of benevolence, this and all other words denoting a disinterested affection, might, without any inconvenience at all, be discarded out of all human language. And yet who is there, that would not find himself strangely at a loss to express the feelings of his own mind, upon ten thousand occasions, were he to be deprived of the use of all words, denoting or implying any such disinterestedness of affection. And tho' Lord Bolingbroke has in these Fragments insisted upon some very just observations, in opposition to the fantastic *state of nature*, described by Mr. Hobbes ; yet there are very strong features of resemblance in the account, that both of them have given us of the rise and origin of sociability in man, or of the several appearances of it in the conduct and affairs of human life. His Lordship makes it to spring from *self-love*, and to be founded upon our *mutual wants*. And tho' the philosopher of Malmesbury describes the *state of nature* as a state of *war*, he makes it however to be the foundation of what he calls the *first law* of nature, and determines to be the *seeking of peace*. See his *Leviathan*, part I. chap. xiv.

P. 237. Among many doctrines, that were taught by those, who pretended to explain the whole scheme and order of divine oeconomy, with respect to man, that of rewards and punishments in a future state was one. It began to be taught long before we have any light into antiquity ; and when we begin to have any, we find it established. How powerful is the desire of continuing to exist ? How predominant is the pride of the human heart ?

The

The making discoveries in *antiquity*, long before we have any light, or memorials relating to *antiquity*, is a thing very frequently pretended to, and familiarly spoken of by Lord Bolingbroke. How he came by this notable faculty of seeing without light, or rather what tolerable sense or meaning can be put upon such expressions we stay not to inquire. It is of more importance to observe, that he constantly affects to speak of the expectation of a future state in man, as the effect of human pride, presumption and arrogance. Thus he tells us, vol. IV. p. 480, 1. that, among the

great variety of hypotheses, *that* was built upon that of a soul, of which he observes that it was calculated to indulge human pride, as well as human curiosity, immortality was common to them all, and—fondly received.

So again, vol. V. p. 390, 1.

He alone is happy, and he is truly so, who can say, welcome life, whatever it brings! Welcome death, whatever it is! “Aut transfert, aut finit.” If the former, we change our state, but we are still the creatures of the same God. He made us to be happy here. He may make us happier in another system of Being. At least, this we are sure of, we shall be dealt with according to the perfections of his nature, not according to the imperfections of our own. Resignation in this instance cannot be hard to one, who thinks worthily of God, nor in the other, except to one, who thinks too highly of man.

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But his Lordship should have considered, that the hope of a future state is founded upon the attributes of God; his infinite power and goodness. The one of which must as certainly dispose him to continue us in being, as the other enables him to do it. To deny, that infinite goodness must dispose, that supreme Creator, to whom we ascribe it, to continue his rational creatures in being, and in a capacity for happiness, and for receiving the communications of his mercy and love, would be as great an absurdity as to deny, that infinite power was able to do this. And what pride or arrogance can there be in reasoning justly, or in making proper inferences from principles of undoubted truth? Were there no being from whom we might reasonably expect any farther happiness, a humble, modest contentment with that share of it, which we do at present enjoy, exclusive of all hope, as to any thing beyond it, would unquestionably be our wisdom. But if an *all-perfect Being* does indeed exist and preside over the universe, as its Creator and Governor, building our expectation upon his glorious attributes, we may surely entertain the hope of a future state without any diminution of our gratitude for the blessings of the present. Not to expect that from God, for the expectation of which, there is an apparent foundation in the supreme perfections of his nature, would be injuring and dishonoring those perfections. In short, his Lordship might as well have said, that it is presumption and pride to believe in an *all-perfect Creator* of the universe, as have said, that it is presumption and pride, to expect that, which the acknowledged attributes of such a Being give us room to expect.

P. 289. The death of Christ, it is said, was proper to discountance presumption, and to discourage men from repeating their transgressions. Surely it would not be hard to shew by reason,
that

that the death of Christ might, and, by fact, that it has countenanced presumption, without discouraging men from repeating their transgressions.

Lord Bolingbroke is here professedly animadverting upon the account that is given by Dr Clarke in his *evidences of natural and revealed religion*, concerning the death of Christ. And it is in his words for the most part, that this objection is expressed. It is probable indeed, that by adhering to these general terms, his Lordship intended to insinuate, that no other, or at least, that no better account of it could be given. A different account however has been actually given in the scripture itself, in which it is easy to discern, that the death of Christ, or that voluntary sacrifice, which he made of his life, to the cause of truth, religion, and virtue, when compared with the exalted dignity of his person, is a noble, and, according to its natural tendency, an highly efficacious means of correcting the moral disorders of the world, and of exciting the greatest abhorrence and detestation of vice and iniquity. What could possibly represent the importance and necessity of virtue in a stronger light, than such a method as this taken in the counsels of heaven for recommending it to the attention and practice of the world? What can operate more powerfully as a motive to universal piety and goodness, upon the grateful and ingenuous principles of our natures, than a sacrifice, like this, flowing from the purest benevolence and the most ardent zeal for the immortal welfare of man? Or what more directly calculated to allure us to the love of virtue, than an example so singular and conspicuous, of an inflexible adherence to its interest and laws? And as for Dr. Clarke's representation of this matter, we own the force of his Lordship's objection. Nay, the Doctor himself seems unawares to have admitted it. For having quoted Romans vi. 1. and supposing his own interpretation of the passage to be allowed,

he immediately expresses himself thus: "The inference to
 " *corrupt* minds is *very natural and obvious*. If God has
 " sent his Son into the world to die for the sins of men;
 " if Christ has given himself a sufficient sacrifice, oblation,
 " and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, is it not
 " a rendering honour to Christ to rely intirely upon his
 " merits, and to depend more upon his satisfaction than
 " upon any virtuous practice of our own? Is it not, they
 " will say, a magnifying of the mercy of God, to think
 " that a vicious life will be easily pardoned, to those who
 " fully rely upon the merits of Christ? May we not there-
 " fore *continue in sin, that grace may abound?*" Clarke's
 Posthum. Sermons, vol. IV. numb. 3. p. 56, 7. A *natu-
 ral and obvious inference* indeed; in another sense perhaps
 than what the Doctor intended. A vicious man is natu-
 rally disposed to corrupt even the best of principles, and
 to pervert them into excuses and palliations for his
 wickedness. But here the inference *obviously* results from
 the very doctrine or principle itself. It is not perverted,
 but only pursued to its natural consequences. For what-
 ever is represented as being of greater efficacy towards ob-
 taining the pardon of our sins from the merciful and gra-
 cious Father of our spirits, than our own sincere repen-
 tance and amendment, must necessarily tend, according to
 such a representation of it, to diminish our apprehension of
 the importance and necessity of repentance, in order to our
 becoming possessed of this divine favor. Lord Boling-
 broke, speaking vol. V. p. 246. of the *offerings and sacri-
 fices*, by which the heathens hoped to *pacify an angry god*,
 very justly observes, that

This single reason will account better for the
 small progress that was made by the heathen
 philosophers, in reforming mankind, than all
 those that Clarke brings.

How

How much is it to be lamented, that, by the very same means the moral efficacy of the gospel has been so dreadfully obstructed!

P. 304. I could set the fallacy of this sort of proof in general and in particular, as it is applied both to the Old Testament and to the New, in a stronger light; if I did not hasten back from this digression to that, which is more immediately my subject.

His Lordship had been just speaking of those *Egyptian, Phœnician, Chaldean, Indian, and Greek traditions and histories*, in which learned men have observed a great conformity with the history of the Old Testament. This conformity they have very justly urged as a proof of the credibility of that history. His Lordship however very sagaciously objects, p. 304. that these traditions and histories,

As they agreed in some, might differ in other particulars: and the whole tenor of those that are lost, might be repugnant to one another, and to *those* of the Jews.

If this observation be admitted as conclusive reasoning, there would surely have been little occasion to *set the fallacy of the proof* referred to, in any *stronger light*. By this single observation the credit of all history whatsoever is effectually overthrown. Who knows but those decads of Livy, which are wanting, might have contradicted all the present histories of the times they referred to? Who can tell, with respect to any one remaining history, but that it might have been proved false and fabulous in every particular, had not some other history relating to the same period been

unluckily lost? His Lordship has, I believe, in a former part of this work, exerted his utmost abilities towards invalidating the credit of the Mosaic history. And he seems to insinuate, that he was furnished with materials for making the same attempt upon the history of the gospels. He has thought proper however to decline it; tho' it would have been much more to his purpose than his rambling declamations about the different opinions prevailing among Christians, and the corruption of their morals; if his purpose really was to consider what could be said either for or against Christianity, and not merely to make a parade with something, that should have the appearance of writing against it, tho' in reality it was only writing about it. The divine institution of Christianity is undoubtedly to be inquired into as a matter of fact. And the truth of it depends upon these questions; whether Christ and his apostles inculcated such and such precepts, and taught such and such doctrines, conducing, in the highest degree, to enforce the practice of moral virtue; whether they wrought such and such miracles ascribed to them in the history of the New Testament; whether in consequence of these miracles, the gospel had all that success, which history records; And, whether, if these things be true, it does not necessarily follow, that it must be a divine institution. These questions are plain and few. The facts they refer to, are most evidently capable of being proved, whatever was the state of the world as to philosophy, morals, and religion, before the establishment of the gospel, or has been since that period. And if these facts are proved true, the miraculous institution of Christianity, as an historical fact, is undeniably proved likewise, whatever becomes of these other questions, or which way soever they may be decided. In this short compass is contained the whole stress and merits of the Christian cause. Upon this footing it has been placed by some of its most judicious defenders. And it were to be wished, that the very learned Dr. Clarke had, in his *evidences*, insisted less upon the opinions

nions of the ancient philosophers, which have little to do with the main argument in favor of the gospel, and more upon its direct, external proofs. But he seems willing to have established the truth of the gospel, as well as the Being and attributes of God, upon priori principles. Of this Lord Bolingbroke was aware; and of this he has made his advantage. The Doctor however asserts, in these *evidences*, p. 328. that “there is no matter of fact in the world, attested in any history, with so many circumstances of credibility, with so many collateral evidences, and in every respect attended with so many marks of truth, as this concerning the doctrine and works of Christ.” And I believe, if Lord Bolingbroke could have disproved the assertion, he would have ventured upon a much larger *digression*.

P. 310, 11. He (*Dr. Clarke*) is much scandalized at those theists, among others, who being so absurd as to imagine, that goodness and justice are not the same in God, which they are in our ideas, but something transcendent, think it impossible we should argue with any certainty about them. This opinion, he says, does not stand on any consistent principles, and must finally recur to absolute atheism. Now I own very freely, that the opinion is mine, and that it is one of those which I think it impious to alter.

Accordingly he tells us, p. 359. that

Upon the whole matter we may conclude safely from error, and in direct opposition to Clarke, that goodness and justice cannot be conceived without manifest presumption and impiety,

“ to be the same as in the ideas we frame of these perfec-
 “ tions, when we consider them in men, or when we rea-
 “ son about them abstractly in themselves; but that in the
 “ supreme Governor of the world, they are something
 “ transcendent, and of which we cannot make any true
 “ judgment, nor argue with any certainty about them.”

As this is one of the first and most fundamental maxims of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, and more especially of his theological system, and as it is a blow directly leveled at the root of all our inquiries concerning the providence of God, and the expectations of man, with respect to a future state of existence, it is highly necessary that we should consider, by what arguments he has endeavored to support it. And they are these four. First, that the idea itself of goodness and of justice is not so clear and distinct as that of wisdom or of power: secondly, that the proofs of divine goodness are not so obvious in the works of creation, as those of divine wisdom and power: thirdly, the infinite transcendency of the divine nature: fourthly, those numberless references, relations, connections, and dependencies, that there must be in the plan of divine providence, and among the several parts of it, with which we are utterly unacquainted. He tells us then, in the first place, p. 312. that

The physical attributes are in their nature more glaring, and less equivocal, *than the* moral;

And, p. 525.

that these latter are not such fixed, uniform, specific natures to human apprehension;

And p. 335.

That we must always talk precariously and impertinently, when we presume to apply our ideas of them to the appearances of things.

So again, p. 341, speaking of the divine wisdom, he says, whereof we have ideas much better determined than we have of divine goodness.

And, in truth, were we to consider how *precariously, impertinently, and indeterminately*, his Lordship has talked concerning the moral attributes ascribed to the Deity, we should be tempted to think, that there was something of reality in what he says concerning the peculiar darkness and obscurity attending our ideas of them. For, one while he tells us, p. 335. that they are

Only different modifications of divine wisdom.

At another time, p. 525, 6.

They are rather assumed nominal natures — framed into abstract general notions by the human mind to help itself in the moral consideration of human actions, and applied to the supreme Being, that we may reason more distinctly, if not more truly, about his nature, and the dispensations of his providence.

And yet, at p. 203, 4. it is affirmed, that we are

As unqualified (*that the ancient philosophers, at least were,*) to contemplate the moral nature and attributes of the supreme Being, as bats are to behold the light of the sun.

On which account it might have been expected, that
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his Lordship himself should have been less dogmatical, than he sometimes appears to be upon this article. But what is most surprizing, is, that we find him, as will presently be seen, contending after all, for that very notion concerning the moral attributes of the Deity, which, upon so many other occasions, he endeavors to explode. In the mean time we will take upon us to affirm, notwithstanding all that his Lordship has been pleased to assert to the contrary, that the idea of goodness is as clear and determinate, as uniform and as little subject to become *equivocal*, as the idea of wisdom or of power. And if the idea itself be so in general, it must be equally so, when applied to the supreme Being. The addition of the terms perfect or infinite, can make no alteration in the case; because whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of perfect goodness, or of infinite goodness, it is immediately discerned that the difficulty must lie in the term, perfect or infinite, not in the term, goodness. And I believe that man would scarce be thought in earnest, who, when speaking of any action of his fellow-creatures, which he supposed to proceed from a benevolent principle, should pretend to say, that he had not as clear an idea of that benevolence, as he had of the power, which was exerted in the performance of such an action, or of the wisdom, which might appear in it. Is there any such thing as gratitude amongst mankind? Or is there a truly grateful man in the world, who has not as *clear*, as *uniform*, as *specific* an idea of the goodness of his benefactor, as he has of his power? Goodness is, I believe, by all, who ever made use of the expression intended to denote a disposition to communicate happiness. And justice likewise, which is the other moral attribute, generally specified by his Lordship, when speaking of the incomprehensibility of moral attributes, as ascribed to the Deity, is universally apprehended to mean an inviolable attachment to those measures, that are best fitted for promoting happiness. It is in this point, that the idea of justice,

ticè, whether applied to private concerns and transactions, or to the administrations of a presiding and governing agent apparently and uniformly centers. Let men differ ever so much in their notions of happiness, or about the means of securing it, and of extending the enjoyment of it, in this they will all be found to agree, that goodness consists in a disposition to promote happiness after the most effectual manner, and justice in adhering to that method inviolably, and without deviation. So that if we can have a clear, determinate, and uniform idea of goodness, the same we may have of justice likewise; since justice properly, and according to the precise nature of it, consists in an unbiassed, steady, impartial adherence to the dictates of goodness. But however clear and determinate may be our abstract notion of goodness, yet his Lordship insists upon it, that we have not in the phaenomena of nature such precise and accurate, such copious and abounding discoveries made of the goodness and justice of God, as we have of the divine wisdom and power. For he tells us, p. 312. that

Every thing shews the wisdom and power of God, conformably to our ideas of wisdom and power in the physical world and in the moral. But every thing does not shew, in like manner, the justice and goodness of God conformably to these attributes in either.

Here again we must venture so far to differ from his Lordship, as to assert, that the creation and providence of God furnish us with as clear ideas, and as convincing proofs of his justice, and of his goodness, as of his wisdom and power. And thus it is that we would maintain the opinion. When we speak of God, we speak of an intelligent, designing agent. Now, previously to the notion or proof of design, or of intelligence in an agent, we must necessarily entertain

entertain the idea or notion of some end proposed or designed to be executed. Without this it is impossible that we should have any idea, either of power or of wisdom, in this or that particular phaenomenon, or combination of phaenomena. For power, when ascribed to an intelligent agent, according to the precise idea and meaning of the very word, denotes an ability to execute some end. Wisdom likewise, in the very idea of it, implies an ability to plan such measures as shall be necessary for the accomplishment of some end. And from hence it follows, that in contemplating any particular phaenomena, which we ascribe to an intelligent agent, we have first the idea of an end suggested to us; and by seeing it so well and so exactly executed, we of course entertain the idea of a power and a wisdom, that is commensurate, or adequate to the accomplishment of such an end. So that in strict propriety goodness is the first idea given us by the phaenomena of the creation. By observing such designs as correspond to the idea of a benevolent, or good agent, accomplished and brought to pass in so vast a compass of nature, we are led to believe that some such benevolent agent is really existing, and possessed of power and wisdom, equal to the execution of such designs. It is not the mere existence of the world that leads us to ascribe it either to a wise or to a powerful agent, but the appearance of design and order in the construction of its various parts. Had there been no appearances of this sort, blind and impotent chance might have accounted for it as well. But it is impossible, that we should have the idea of a designing agent, without entertaining at the same time the idea of somewhat that is designed to be accomplished. Wisdom, power, and goodness are distinct and separate ideas, and may be usefully made, each of them, the subject of our distinct speculation. But the proofs of divine wisdom, of divine power, and of divine goodness are the same. The same phaenomena that prove any one of these attributes, prove the others also; because
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every proof of divine power, and of divine wisdom, necessarily supposes the discovery of some end, that has been proposed or aimed at in the exertion of them. And if there are no phaenomena in nature, that give us the idea of any other end proposed by the supreme Creator, than happiness, then must the proof of divine goodness, and consequently of divine justice, be just as clear and as extensive as the proofs either of divine wisdom, or of divine power. With respect to any particular phaenomena, of which we are unable to assign the ends and uses, the inability is properly to be imputed to the scantiness and limitation of our views. But could it possibly be owing to any imperfection at all in the author of nature, according to our ideas of perfection, it might as well be ascribed to a defect of power or of wisdom, according to our ideas of these, as to a defect of goodness, according to our ideas of that. And were it not for those abundant proofs of wisdom and power, so conspicuous in other parts, and in the general phaenomena, of the creation, this or that dark and intricate phaenomenon would no more have contributed to give us the idea of wisdom or of power, than of goodness. We acknowledge wisdom and power even in these, on account of those abounding marks and tokens of them, which are elsewhere discoverable. But in the very same instances, and on the very same account we are as much obliged, in consistency of reasoning, to acknowledge the divine goodness, as the divine wisdom and power. His Lordship very justly observes, p. 334. speaking of the divine works, that

Tho' we cannot discern the wisdom of contrivance and direction, which are more remote from our observation (*i. e.* "than the power of executing") in every instance, yet we see them in so many, that it becomes the highest absurdity not to acknowledge them in all.

Is not this an observation as justly applicable to the divine goodness? But we are told 3dly, and at p. 358, 9. that,

On account of the infinite distance between the divine and human nature — we shall never be able to discover how wisdom coincides with goodness or justice — in various phaenomena of nature.

His Lordship indeed here mentions wisdom, as well as goodness and justice, and has unawares involved it in his argument. Yet from what follows, there is reason to believe, that he intended the observation to conclude only against our having any determinate ideas of the moral attributes of the Deity, *vid. supra*, p. 151, 2. We will therefore here remark, that, tho' between the divine and human nature there is indeed an infinite distance, yet this implies no more of difficulty in our forming a determinate and clear idea of the divine goodness, than of the divine wisdom or power; because the wisdom of God and the power of God as much transcend all human wisdom and human power, as the goodness of God can be supposed to transcend all human goodness.

The numberless and unknown relations respectively to all which the divine providence acts are introduced, *ibid.* and in the same connection.

And this we observed was a fourth argument, by which his Lordship endeavors to support his principle of the absolute incomprehensibility of the moral attributes ascribed to the Deity, and their total dissimilitude to our ideas of them. But is it not obvious to observe, that the idea of the divine goodness, and the idea of those measures, by which its purposes may be most effectually accomplished are wholly distinct and separate? Of these latter we are not indeed
competent

competent judges, on account of those infinite relations that must be supposed to subsist between the several parts of the immense plan of divine providence ; and which are to us altogether unknown. But still we may have a very clear idea of a goodness, which we believe to be so pure and perfect, as that it will invariably adhere to these measures. And if this observation would prove any thing with relation to our ignorance of the divine attributes, it would surely prove our ignorance of the divine wisdom, rather than of the divine goodness. In short it must, I think, be undeniably plain upon a little reflection, that there can be no possible reason assigned, for supposing the divine goodness to be different from our idea of goodness, which would not likewise prove, that the divine power and wisdom must be different from our ideas of power and wisdom ; and therefore that hypothesis, according to the judgment of Dr. Clarke “ stands “ not upon any consistent principles.” And if it should not be thought to “ recur to absolute atheism,” it does, I think, very naturally terminate in something worse. For if goodness in the Deity be not the same as in our ideas, it may be any thing, it may be malevolence, it may be consistent with cruelty and with infinite confusion and mischief. It is at least plain, that any one, who was disposed absolutely to deny the goodness of God, could not do it under a more convenient mask, than that of saying, “ that goodness in God is “ not the same as in our ideas.” This is in effect denying his goodness, because the person who says this, cannot be able to assign any other sense, in which he does believe the Deity to be good. And it “ is excellently well spoken” by Bathynous in the truly *divine dialogues* of Dr. Hen. More, p. 55. that “ to give no other account of the nature of “ God and his ways, than that they are *unintelligible*, is “ to encourage the atheist, and yield him the day ; for that “ is the thing he does chiefly applaud himself in, that he is “ secure there is neither head nor foot in the mysteries of “ religion, and that the very notion of a God implies a
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"contradiction to our faculties," Lord Bolingbroke is, in some parts of his writings, almost perpetually insisting upon it, that in our notions of the supreme Being, we are to adhere closely to the phaenomena. Now if the phaenomena of nature discover any goodness at all to us, it is certainly such a goodness as we have an idea of. What then could have been more absurdly contradictory than his insisting upon it likewise, that goodness in God is not the same as in our ideas? What other sort of goodness do the phaenomena present to our view, or suggest to our thoughts? To do him justice however, we must not neglect to observe, that he has fairly given up this hypothesis. In proof of which I do not insist upon his very frequent use of arguments drawn from human ideas of the divine goodness and justice, whenever he thinks proper to oppose certain theological doctrines; because it may perhaps be urged, as he himself has occasionally intimated, that all this was done by way of argument *ad hominem* & *ex abundantia*. Nor yet shall I urge his inculcating so frequently, as he does, and with the highest reason and propriety, that we ought to ascribe all *conceivable* perfection to the Deity. But the following passages I produce as containing an absolute surrender of his most favorite maxim, p. 85. he says, that

As we ought not to presume to measure the divine perfections, nor the proceedings of infinite wisdom, by our scanty and precarious ideas, so it is worse than presumption to ascribe, even hypothetically, to the all-perfect Being any thing that is "*evidently*" repugnant to our ideas of perfection."

Does not his Lordship then in this passage, expressly and formally make our ideas of goodness to be the notion or
idea,

idea, by which we ought to judge of the divine goodness? But still more expressly he says, p. 507.

I think myself "*obliged*," among the various opinions, that are, or may be entertained of the divine proceedings to embrace as probable, if I embrace any, "*that and that alone*," which comes nearest to the best notions I can frame of moral perfection.

Those then, who profess to entertain any opinions at all concerning the moral attributes of the Deity, are fully vindicated, in adhering to their own natural notions of goodness and of justice, whenever they ascribe such attributes in particular to the supreme Governor of the world. Nor could any thing have been more flagrantly inconsistent with this maxim, than his Lordship's pretending to ascribe "any" moral attributes at all to the supreme Deity, whilst at the same time he denied them to be agreeable to our ideas of "moral perfection."

P. 313. God is then infinitely wise: he does always that which is fittest to be done. That which is fittest to be done, is always just and good, and the dispute is over.

This is very smartly said. But yet I must beg leave to observe, that, unless his Lordship had given us some more determinate idea of fitness as applied to moral subjects, than he has any where done in these volumes, instead of having decided the dispute so laconically and concisely as he would persuade us to believe, he has indeed left it just where it was before. Fitness must mean either a relation to some end, or it must mean the same as goodness, or it must mean nothing at all, or, which is to the same amount exactly, it

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may mean any thing at all. If it means, in the present question, a fitness in any measure of conduct or administration to promote happiness, it is indeed plain, that, that which is fit, or, in other words, that such a measure pursued with a view to such an end, is "just and good." If it means the same as justice and goodness, why are not these plainer and more intelligible terms made use of? Or why not mean either the one or the other of these; if it does must we trifle with identical propositions? But if it does not mean either the best method of promoting happiness, or a disposition to communicate happiness, then it does not in any sort follow, that, that, which is fit must necessarily be just and good. We have in this case no idea at all of fitness, and therefore cannot compare it with justice and goodness. And the question, instead of being decided, is only evaded.

P. 326. Man is then the principal inhabitant of this planet, a being superior to all the rest. But will it follow from hence, that the system, wherein this planet rolls, or even this planet alone, was made for the sake of man? Will it follow, that infinite wisdom had no other end in making man, than that of making an happy creature? Surely not. The suppositions are arbitrary, and the consequences absurd.

That man was not made solely to be happy is a favorite maxim of Lord Bolingbroke's, which he almost perpetually confounds with a position of a very different nature; namely, that man is not the only order of rational beings made to be happy. This latter we readily admit; and that even this world was not made for him alone, but for the benefit likewise of the whole animal tribe, to whose *utility*, as his Lordship very justly observes, p. 338. it is plainly *accommodated*.

dated. Still however, it may be very true, that the only end of man's creation relative to himself, was his happiness. That Lord Bolingbroke should maintain the contrary is not much to be wondered at, when we recollect the view that has just now been given of his sentiments concerning the moral attributes of the Deity. But there are several other reasons which he has assigned for this contrary hypothesis. He tells us, for example, p. 333, that to suppose

Man made solely to be happy *is contrary to experience; because* by the constitution of the material, and by that of the intellectual world —the human race is exposed to various evils, permanent and contingent, physical and moral.

But nothing, I think, can be more natural than to suppose, nothing more agreeable to the acknowledgements we make of the imperfection of our understandings, and shortness of our views, than to believe, that the evils incident to man in this present scene of being, may, in the whole extent of his existence, contribute to a greater quantity of happiness than could otherwise have been produced. And if so, his present condition can afford no argument at all against the opinion, that he was made, so far as relates to himself, *solely to be happy.* His Lordship observes, p. 366.

That no metaphysical or theological presumption is mad enough to assert that we are capable of knowing what the constitution, order, and harmony of an universe require.

May not this observation be applicable to the measures calculated for promoting the happiness of man in particular, as well as to the complex, entire system of the universe?

But farther, his Lordship seems to suppose, that man could not be made *solely* to be happy, because he is only a part of the universal system of being. For thus he expresses himself, p. 332. speaking of the universe.

It could not be a consistent scheme, unless the whole was the final cause of every part and no one, nor more parts the final causes of the whole.

This, and other observations of the like nature, which occur in his Lordship's reflections upon this subject, are extremely just and proper; and they would be very pertinent-ly alleged to prove, that man was not the only order of rational beings made to be happy. But so far are they from proving, that happiness is not the sole end of his creation relative to himself, that they do indeed necessarily imply, that it is so; if what his Lordship says, *ibid.* be true, as undoubtedly it is, that

The system of the universe is the best of all possible systems.

For can this be true, unless the happiness of the whole be the final cause of the whole? And if so, man, as a part of the whole, must be solely made for happiness, or else the whole is not made for happiness. And if man was not made to be happy, we may as well believe concerning the rational inhabitants of other planets, that they were not made to be happy, as his Lordship seems to own, when he makes it, p. 330. to be an objection against supposing this world to

be made for the sake of man, *that then* we must assume that God made every other world
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for the sake of the rational inhabitants he designed to place in it.

But if we may say of man, and of the rational inhabitants of any other planet, that they were not made to be happy, we may say the same of some other order of rational beings, and so on of all. And thus we should fall into the manifest contradiction of supposing, that the whole was made for happiness, and yet none of the parts. If man be a part of the universal system, there must surely be a final cause of his creation relative to himself, as well as to his connection with the other parts of this system. And if it be the *best of all possible systems*, this final cause of his creation can, in both these views, be no other than happiness.

His Lordship indeed insinuates once and again, see p. 330 and 356. that there might be some

Other and greater motives, *not relative either to man's own happiness, or to that chain, of which he makes a link, on which man was created, and which it is impossible for us to guess at.*

But if we may judge of the rest by one which his Lordship has assigned, it can scarce be worth our while to make any conjectures about them. For, in short, he very gravely surmises, that both man, and the whole tribe of animals inhabiting this world, might be created for no other reason, but merely to fill up an empty place, and because there happened to be room for them.

The habitation (*this world*) p. 328. is fit for him (*man*) and he is fitted to live in it. He could not exist in any other. But will it follow, that the planet was made for him, not he for the planet? The ass would be scorched in Ve-

nus or Mercury, and be frozen in Jupiter or Saturn. Will it follow, that this temperate planet was made for him, to bray and to eat thistles in it?

For this contemptuous representation of our condition in this world, allotted by the providence of heaven, he endeavors to make some amends, by telling us, p. 337. that tho' *we* should

say, that the world was made, such as it is, without any regard to them, (*its inhabitants*) the proofs of divine wisdom and goodness will be equally strong; for if the world was made for the universe only, and without any regard to its future inhabitants, this wisdom and goodness were exercised as much in fitting these inhabitants to live commodiously in a world already made, as they could have been in making a world on purpose for them.

And were we under any necessity of excluding either the one or the other of these suppositions, it might be much the same, which of them we retained. But surely the divine wisdom and goodness will appear far more conspicuous, if we adhere to them both. It must in particular give us a higher idea of the goodness of God to suppose, that, in the formation of the world, he had in view the happiness, which man and its other inhabitants enjoy in consequence of their situation, without interfering with any other ends, which it might answer with respect to the intire universe, than to suppose it to have been created for these ends exclusively, and that its suitableness to accomodate man and the
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the animal species was purely accidental. But indeed, how is it possible, that it should have been accidental? To admit this, would be in the highest degree dishonorable to the divine perfections. For must it not have been known to the supreme Being at the creation of the world, that the construction of it was such, as that, besides the important purposes it was fitted to answer, with respect to the universe, it would likewise be a suitable habitation for man and for the animal species? To suppose therefore, that it was not originally designed for their use, plainly implies an accession of goodness to the divine character, and that God was more disposed to communicate happiness, when he made man and the several classes of animals to inhabit the world, than when he made the world itself without any view to the happiness of its inhabitants, tho' in the very construction of it so well suited for that purpose. After such a reason assigned for the creation of man, we cannot be much surprized to find it next asserted, that both man himself, and the world which he inhabits, were made for no reason at all.

Whatever was the final cause of the world, *we are told*, p. 468. whatever motive, (for we must speak after the manner of men) the first cause had to create it, *this* (which) motive could not arise from any thing without himself, and must be therefore resolved into his mere will.

But why into mere will? Is there any greater difficulty in apprehending, that the goodness of the divine Being may be essential to his nature, than there is in supposing his wisdom and power to be so. Nay, must we not believe, that it is equally essential, unless we would impute to the self-existent Deity acquired attributes, qualities or perfections, which must surely be the greatest of absurdities. And if so,

is there not an internal motive, wholly different from *mere will*, to which we may ascribe the creation of the world? How easily would all this inconsistency and confusion have been avoided, only by adhering to the *phaenomena*, agreeably to his Lordship's advice, upon so many other occasions. For, as it seems utterly impossible to conceive, that an independent, self-existent Being, who must necessarily enjoy a self-originate happiness, could have any other motive to creation than either goodness or malevolence, so among all the various opinions, that have ever prevailed in the world, there has never been any one, who has avowedly maintained, that it was made by an evil Being. The utmost that has been formally and directly attempted in this way, has been to divide the province of nature, and the empire of the world between a good and an evil one. And even those, whose opinions have consequentially approached still nearer towards the introduction of a universally malevolent principle presiding in nature, have thought themselves bound to assert, however inconsistently, a general opinion of the goodness of the great Creator and Sovereign of the world. So powerful and constraining is the testimonie of nature in proof of it.

P. 348. Lest the bare existence of evil should not afford the atheist color enough to deny the being of God, nor the divine a sufficient foundation, whereon to erect, by the seeming authority of reason, that system of another world, which is, and always has been, of great advantage to him in this, they proceed to consider these evils in the distribution of them. The supposed injustice of this distribution has been ever in their mouths a subject of accusation, not to say of invective against the providence of God.

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Of that amazing acrimony and rancor of spirit, which Lord Bolingbroke has indulged, as in other parts of his works, so especially, when he is advancing his accusation against divines for their imputation of injustice, irregularity, and disorder to the providence of God, in the dispensations of the present world, and their unnatural concurrence in this sentiment, with the atheist, we declare our utmost abhorrence and detestation. Nevertheless it must be owned, that they have in general given but too just an occasion for the charge itself. There is no one indeed, who could have advanced it with so ill a grace as Lord Bolingbroke; since he is himself to the full as guilty of this very imputation, expressing it only in different words. Thus he tells us, p. 312. that

The theist (*meaning himself*) acknowledges, whatever God has done to be just and good in itself, tho' it does not appear such in every instance, conformably to his ideas of justice and goodness.

So again, p. 342.

You (*the atheist*) may cavil about the proofs of his (*the divine*) goodness, and produce instances, that seem repugnant to it, and that would be so, if your hypothesis was true;

That is, if goodness must be thought to be the same in God, as in our ideas. Nay, he even tells us, p. 368. that

It cannot *be so much as* disputed, and that all sides agree, that many of the phaenomena are repugnant to these (*our*) ideas of goodness and justice.

Is not this charging the providence of God with injustice, and a defect of goodness, as directly, as it is possible for an atheist to do it? In what other sense does he, the atheist, deny the phaenomena to be consistent with goodness and justice, but according to our ideas of goodness and justice? Allow him to do this, and he will afterwards, as willingly as his Lordship himself, or at least he very consistently may *acknowledge*, whatever God *has done to be just and good in itself*; because he would know, that having excluded our ideas of justice and goodness, in saying this he acknowledged nothing at all. As to the unequal distribution, however, of good and evil, and the disproportionate from of them assigned by providence to the good and virtuous, the wicked and immoral, so particularly insisted upon by the generality of divines in their reasonings upon a future state, his Lordship has made some very just observations. He has endeavored to shew, that even the fact itself is by no means sufficiently proved, and has drawn a very natural argument to this purpose from the difficulty of ascertaining precisely, who are the good or who the happy, and from the absurdity of placing the chief happiness of man in those outward enjoyments, upon the promiscuous distribution of which this notion of the inequality and irregularity of the present dispensations of divine providence is principally founded. See p. 372—404. He has likewise very justly represented this notion as being highly dishonorable to the divine perfections and character, notwithstanding the amends, that it is supposed will be made for these irregularities in a future state. For, as is most truly alleged, p. 493, 4.

When we say amends have been made, we imply, that injustice has been committed; and it is beyond omnipotence to cause that which has been done not to have been done.

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So that, according to this bold hypothesis, as he goes on, *ibid.*

The state of good men in heaven *seems to be represented* as an act of God's justice against himself, as it were, in short, an act by which he makes them reparation — for the injustice he did them here.

Either this is a just representation of the sentiments referred to, or never men expressed themselves so inaccurately, and in a manner so little answerable to their own meaning as divines, when they talk of the “inequalities of the present state, the irregularities of divine providence, the disorders apparent in the present conduct of it, the want of a sufficient distinction made between the virtuous and the vicious, the perverse situation of things in the present scene of being, and of having all set right hereafter.” Upon every supposition therefore, such language as this ought to be wholly exterminated out of the religious and Christian world. If the meaning be bad, both that and the meaning too. If the meaning be good; the language for that very reason. A late writer indeed, in his *View of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy*, letter ii. p. 81, 2. tells us, that the *divine* is “as far as his Lordship” from saying, that the present “constitution of things is faulty.” Yet in these very letters he is constantly represented as maintaining that the distributions of providence in this world are “unequal and irregular” and such as want to be “rectified” and “set right.” See p. 68, 69. 79. 82. 112. 123. 130. Now, for my part, I can see no other difference between “irregular” and “faulty,” than in the mere spelling of the words. And I think that a “fault” may be as easily “rectified” as an “irregularity” and as much to the honor of that Being to whom we impute it. This author likewise, p. 80, 81. speaks with approbation of Mr. Pope's maxim,

maxim; "whatever is, is right;" and of the *reason*, which *he gives* for it, namely, that "we see only a part of the "moral system, and not the whole." From hence one would have thought it very evidently to follow; that there were no "irregularities" at all in this moral system, that is, in the conduct of divine providence relative to the different characters of the virtuous and the vicious. But behold a stupendous mystery! In this very system, this absolutely "right" and perfect system there are "irregularities:" and not only so, but these very "irregularities" are "right." For thus does this author express himself, p. 81. and by way of inference from the maxim above-mentioned. "Therefore these *irregularities* serving to great purposes, "such as the fuller manifestation of God's goodness and "justice are *right*." So then there are in the "present "administration of providence" irregularities and no irregularities—or right is wrong—or regular and irregular, mean one and the same thing. Such is the utter confusion of language and contradiction of ideas, with which, it seems, we must be content, rather than give up the favorite topic of an "unequal providence" in the present world. "Are not my ways equal? saith the Lord." No, says the advocate for a future state, upon the principles of this argument, as said Israel of old, "the way of the Lord "is not equal." And this he does in express terms assert, so often as he alleges in support of his belief the "unequal" distributions at present made in the course of divine providence. "The Lord is righteous in *all* his ways and holy in *all* his works." No, says the same person, there are "some" of his works that want to be "set right," and that will be "set right" hereafter. Could this be the case if they were not now wrong? If amends will be made hereafter so much the better; but still this very supposition implies, that they are now wrong. And if they are now wrong, it will be true to all eternity, that they were wrong. And is this a charge to be brought against the eternal Father

ther of mercies? What can be more injurious to his ever-adorable character than such an imputation? Or what more grossly derogate from his pure, essential goodness, in bestowing upon us the happiness of futurity, than to consider it in no other light than as making amends for wrongs he has already done us? If the providential events referred to, are supposed to be in the wisest and best manner calculated for producing some greater good in a future state, or with respect to some other parts of the creation, than otherwise could have been effected, why are they called "inequalities, perversions, disorders?" why represented as standing in need of "amendment?" Are these the proper terms, by which to describe measures, that are in themselves, and in the very best manner, adapted to promote happiness? If this be not supposed, then is real injury and wrong imputed to the conduct of the sovereign Deity? And indeed an imputation of this kind seems necessarily to be implied in the very nature and meaning of this argument drawn from the unequal distribution of things, in favor of a future state, as well as in the terms, in which it is usually expressed, however it may be occasionally blended with some better sentiments. Else why is this language so invariably adhered to? why so much pains taken to exaggerate the supposed miseries of a virtuous state, and to exalt the joys and triumphs of wickedness? Why such a jealousy of those who contend for the present reward of virtue? Why are they so frequently represented as destroying the best and most fundamental argument in favor of a future state? If actual disorders and irregularities in the present scene of providence be necessary to the proof of such a state, the reason is plain. But otherwise, and in truth, were every virtuous man upon earth to be ten thousand times happier, than he really is, this would not in the least diminish the evidence, of our future existence. Lord Bolingbroke has well enough exposed the folly and absurdity of the notion itself, of an "unequal" distribution

tion in the present scene of divine providence ; but has entered into no examination of the force of the argument founded upon it. Whether this has happened casually, or was owing to design, I know not. If the latter, it is one of the finest strokes of sceptical policy, that is anywhere to be met with in his Lordship's writings. If the sentiment be false, the argument must fall of course ; and to have entered into any particular examination of the weakness of the argument, supposing the sentiment to be true, would only have tended to remind us of other arguments far more conclusive, in favor of the very doctrine it is intended to support. His Lordship is so far from doing this, that he is almost perpetually taking it for granted, that this is the only moral argument, that can be urged in defence of that doctrine.

But as one would wish to eradicate, if possible, a sentiment so highly injurious and dishonorable to the divine character, as that of an unequal distribution in the divine oeconomy, so I think nothing can more effectually answer this purpose, than to shew the weakness and incompetency of the argument, even admitting the sentiment, upon which it is founded. At best it is an argument that we can be under no necessity of having recourse to, even upon the hypothesis of those who advance it. For they maintain the moral perfections and absolute goodness of the Deity, and suppose them to have been proved independently of this argument. Without this supposition, the argument itself would be altogether invalid. For thus it is deduced and established.—A God infinite in all moral perfection, if he does any partial wrong at present, will most certainly make amends for it hereafter — But God is a Being infinite in all moral perfection—and there are actual inequalities and disorders in the present conduct of his providence —therefore there is another state, in which these things will be “ set right. ” — But, if God be in reality, absolutely and unchangeably good, is not this an infinitely

nitely better argument in proof of a future state, than any supposed inequalities in his present dispensations? How ridiculous would it be in the case of a human benefactor, to depend more for future favors, upon the injuries he had once done us, than upon the favors he had already conferred, or upon the general goodness of his character? But this is not all. The argument is not only superfluous, but apparently inconsistent and self-contradictory. It supposes the supreme Being to be infinitely perfect; it supposes that there is, at the same time, in the present proceedings of this all-perfect Being, irregularities and disorders, for which reparation and amends to be made hereafter. But is this possible? Can there be in the proceedings of such a Being, any one irregularity, any one disorder? The very terms imply a defect, either of wisdom, or of power, or of goodness. If there be such irregularities in the conduct of divine providence, there is not such an all-perfect Being: if there is an all-perfect Being, there cannot be any such irregularities. And justly is it said by Lord Bolingbroke, p. 493.

Man may have amends to make; God never can.

But could the argument be made consistent, still it would be absolutely inconclusive. For if such irregularities are reconcilable to such a character now, so they may be hereafter. Confusion and inequality of measures cannot, in any future period, be less reconcilable to perfect goodness than they are at present. So that, according to what is necessarily implied in this very argument itself, either there may be no future state for man, or, if there be, the same irregularities, that are now complained of, may be continued, or others introduced, or at least no reparation made for these. Nay, from the principles of this argument, it follows, that no such reparation either will, or
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can be made. In the case of any wrong or injury done us by any of our fellow-creatures thro' inconsideration, passion, or the influence of this or that particular temptation, we may sometimes infer, from the general goodness of their character, that they will hereafter repair and make amends for it. But this reasoning cannot be applied to the Deity. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him." If he has done wrong in any one instance whatsoever, this must have proceeded from some inherent principle of his immutable nature. So that it must be utterly impossible that this wrong should ever be made amends for; since the doing wrong, and the reparation of that wrong, can never proceed from one and the same principle. We cannot therefore infer, from such irregularities and disorders, as are supposed in this argument, that there is a future state, in which they will be set right, or made amends for; because this would imply some change or alteration in the character of the supreme and eternal Deity. Should it however be allowed possible, that the argument might be in some measure conclusive, yet would it be extremely defective, and fall vastly short of proving what it is intended to prove; that is, a future state universally and with respect to all mankind. The lot of the virtuous, it is said, is oftentimes in this world very wretched and forlorn, there must therefore be a future state, in which a recompence will be made them. But are all the virtuous miserable? Who will affirm it? Who will deny, that there are many of this character, whose happiness has vastly exceeded their miseries in this life? And with respect to such, this argument can be no proof at all of their future existence. And a virtuous man might be well afraid of being happy here, lest by this means he should forfeit his hope of being so hereafter. But supposing even all the virtuous to be in this world hardly and unequally dealt with, and that for this reason there must necessarily be another, in which justice will be done them, and a compensation made for the
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the injuries they have received, in how short a space of duration may this retribution be compleated? In a period far less extensive than the half, or the tenth part, or any smaller portion you will please to assign of their existence here. And this necessary amends being made us, if we are of the number, and have nothing else to depend upon, we must lose both our argument, and our being together.

P. 488, 9. Some things may be admitted piously, on the faith of a revelation, concerning which we can scarce attempt to reason without impiety. Thus we may believe, that men are to live again in another state, and that they will be dealt with there, even with some regard to the use that they have made of their free-will here. But to enforce this hypothesis, by an attempt to prove, that the dispensations of providence here are unjust, or to advance any thing concerning the assumed future state, which cannot be reconciled to the divine perfections, is impious and absurd.

This, and much more to the same purpose, is said in consequence of a principle, which, as has been already observed, his Lordship is very desirous of inculcating, namely, that there is no other moral argument in favor of a future state, but that which is drawn from the unequal distribution of things in the present world. And if this were true, it must indeed be utterly impossible to prove the reality of such a state. But to me it appears, that setting this notion intirely aside, there are the strongest arguments of this kind to be urged in proof of such a state; and which, in their united view, amount to the

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plainest demonstration of it. In the first place, and as the foundation of all, this doctrine seems to be with the greatest clearness and certainty deducible from the perfect goodness of God, in connection with his infinite power, and his absolute immutability of nature. Why did the supreme Father of spirits bring us into being at all, but that he might communicate happiness? So long therefore as he continues to be possessed of the same degree of goodness, will he not continue us in being for the same end? Is not his goodness uniform, invariable, eternal? So that it seems undeniably to follow from the acknowledged goodness of God, that there must be the same reason for the continuance of human souls in being, as there was for the creation of them. The creation of intelligent and conscious beings, made capable of happiness, and designed for it, and the annihilation of such beings, are actions of a directly contrary nature. They cannot therefore possibly proceed from the same principles, but must be derived from directly contrary motives. But these contrary motives cannot, without the utmost absurdity, be ascribed to one and the same being, possessed of an essentially permanent and unchangeable character. It seems not possible to conceive of a greater contradiction, than that the same being possessed of an equal degree of goodness, should at one period bring into existence creatures made capable, by the original frame and constitution of their natures, of such a glorious state of happiness as human souls are most apparently fitted to enjoy, and, at another period, annihilate those creatures. Let any man compare his ideas of perfect goodness, with the supposition of the absolute and everlasting destruction of rational and moral beings, and see if he can possibly reconcile or make them compatible with each other. The supposition therefore of the cessation of human souls can no otherwise be made consistent with the divine goodness, than by supposing likewise the divine power to be exhausted, and that the Creator of them is no longer able

to continue their existence. But is this to be admitted? Is it not equally easy to the divine power to continue them in existence to all eternity, as it was at first to bring them into being? If therefore they cease to exist, this can only be in consequence of a direct, immediate act of the divine omnipotence exerted for the very purpose of striking them out of being. Is it possible to conceive of a greater change of nature and moral character, than this must imply? Would it not be, as it were, a refusing to communicate happiness by destroying the very possibility of enjoying it? Is it not the annihilation of eternal happiness? And can this be reconciled to immutable and eternal goodness? This reasoning cannot be at all invalidated by the supposition of an eternal creation of other human souls, or of other orders of rational beings; because even by this the divine power can be no more exhausted, than by the creation of any single intelligent being. Nor can the force of it be in any other manner evaded, but either by denying the divine goodness to be the same as in our ideas, or else by ascribing bounds and limits, that is, imperfection to it. Both these methods have accordingly been attempted by Lord Bolingbroke. The former has been distinctly considered already. And, notwithstanding all that his Lordship has thought proper to assert to the contrary, it does, I hope appear, that there is, and can be but one idea of goodness. How absurd and ridiculous would it be to talk of two kinds of malice, or of two kinds of selfishness? It is equally so to talk of two kinds of goodness. So that to deny, that goodness in God is the same as in our ideas, is, in effect, to deny the very attribute itself. Goodness in us, and in our ideas, is a disposition to communicate happiness. He therefore, who denies goodness to be the same in God, as in us or in our ideas, must deny, that God is willing to communicate happiness. And he that denies this, denies the goodness of God in reality, how much soever he may in words assert

it. But his Lordship insists upon it, p. 528, that the moral attributes of the Deity must necessarily be bounded.

They (*the schools of artificial theology*) talk of his (*Gods*) infinite goodness and justice, as of his infinite wisdom and power, tho' the latter may preserve their nature without any conceivable bounds, and the former must cease to be what they are, unless we conceive them bounded.

But I apprehend, that the word, infinite, must be altogether as intelligible, when applied to the divine goodness and justice, as when applied to the divine wisdom and power. And if the divine goodness must be said to be bounded, as his Lordship contends, only because it pursues its end according to the measures dictated by infinite wisdom, for a reason equally good, that wisdom itself may be said to be bounded, because it never is or can be exerted, but in subserviency to goodness. And by the like method of reasoning, the power of God will be bounded, because it never is, or can be employed, but in promoting happiness. Men indeed are often obliged to limit and restrain the exercise of their goodness in this or that particular instance, in order to reserve to themselves the full power of exerting it upon some more important occasion. But this cannot be the case with respect to the Deity. Nor is it possible, that his goodness or his justice should be confined by his power or wisdom, unless there be something in the necessary idea and nature of these attributes, that is contrary to the idea of goodness and of justice; which will not surely be affirmed. Notwithstanding, therefore, any thing that is contained in this remark of his Lordship's, the goodness of God may be perfect, unbounded goodness. And if so, man is surely made for a state of immortal existence. How much soever men may talk of the
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divine goodness, yet it is plain, that, if they are afraid to build upon it their hope of future happiness, they have but a very low and diminutive opinion of it; and that they do not in truth believe the supreme Deity to be so good as themselves. What numbers are there in the world, of whose benevolence we have so full and lively a conviction, as to be absolutely assured, that so long as they had it in their power to make us happy, they would never want the disposition or the will. And can we not believe thus much of God? This belief is, in effect, the belief of our souls immortality. Nay, I cannot think it possible, that there is on earth even that abandoned wretch, who, if he had it in his power to continue mankind in immortal existence, without the least difficulty, pain, or trouble to himself, would refuse to do it, at their request. Shall it ever then be believed, that the supreme Deity, who is goodness itself, pure, absolute, immutable goodness, will refuse to gratify our ardent thirst after immortality and eternal bliss? We must therefore either believe a future state, or we must deny, that God is good, or, which comes to the same intirely, we must say that goodness is not the same in God as in our ideas.

Exactly agreeable to this deduction from the attributes of the supreme, eternal Deity, is that natural expectation of a future state, of which every human mind is most apparently conscious, and which is the second argument in proof of such a state that we proposed to advance. The rational faculty in man is not a clearer discovery that he was made to act with reason, the benevolent principle in man is not a stronger proof, that he was made for society, the principle of conscience in human nature is not a more certain evidence, that he was made for moral views, than this natural expectation, or presage of a future state is, that he was made for such a state. It is impossible for us to assign any other reason for this implanted hope, but that it was immediately intended to discover to us the reality of a future state, or our being made for a farther existence. If

the expectation of this future state be natural to mankind, of which there are the most abundant proofs in the universality of the expectation itself, in the hopes of some, in the fears of others, this presage or anticipation of it must have been implanted in the human mind by the great Creator and Father of spirits, God himself. We must believe it to have been done with some design and view, otherwise we must impeach his wisdom. And we cannot possibly conceive of any other end which it could be designed to answer, than to give us the assurance and manifestation of such a state. So that this natural expectation of a future existence, is no other than a proof of the very thing itself. It is the discovery, or revelation made of another world, by the very same method, in which aliother things most essentially relative to man, to his duty to his hopes, to his rank and designation, are made known ; that is, by an inherent principle, by the very frame and constitution of his own mind. Nothing can be more evident, than that, had it pleased the supreme Father of spirits, he might have totally excluded from the constitution and frame of the human mind all apprehension of a future state ; so as that it would have been utterly impossible for us to have acquired the idea of any existence, beyond the limits of the grave. No doubt, but that there are many ideas, of which, because they have no connection with any interests of our being, we are intirely destitute ; tho' other rational beings, to whom they may be of great importance, may be accordingly endowed with them. And if we had no real connection with a future state, it seems evident, that the idea of it would never have entered into the human mind in any other manner, than as a mere fiction or reverie, incident to some peculiarly extravagant and enthusiastic spirits. But as the expectation of a future state plainly appears to have been interwoven into the very texture of the human mind, this seems most evidently to have been intended by the great Author of our being, for giving us the assurance, that we are really interested in such a state. In what other method could

could such an assurance have been more immediately or clearly given us?

Another argument, that may be very fairly urged, in proof of a future state, is drawn from the actual condition and present appearance of things. Tho' we reject that, which is founded upon a supposed unequal distribution in the conduct of divine providence, to be hereafter compensated, tho' we look upon the events spoken of under these dishonorable terms, to be perfect parts of a perfect whole, and therefore to stand in need of no correction, yet does the present order or oeconomy of things afford us no slight or feeble indications of that future state, which from the arguments that have been already insisted upon, appears to have been so clearly made known. Thus, for example, the powers of the human mind are most evidently capable of being exalted to a far higher pitch of activity and improvement, of dignity and perfection, than they have in any instance attained to in the present world. In the merely animal species, we see no marks of such an incessant capacity for farther attainments. They soon arrive at their full maturity. But among men, none are more keenly sensible of the capacity of their own minds, for something still unattained, than those, who having already made the fullest trial of their mental powers, have attained the most. And that these capacious powers are the same, in general throughout the species, is evident from hence, that in every part of the world, and in every age, there have been the most incontestable specimens of them. And were there to be a common school or nursery for minds and understandings to be instituted, into which children of every climate were at their earliest years to be introduced, it would, as I suppose, be impossible to distinguish, by their mental improvements, those of the most barbarous nations from those of the most civilized and polite. The human mind therefore is capable of making a far greater progress in knowledge, in virtue, and in degree of happiness, than is attainable in this world. But why such a capacity given, if not to be extended into another

scene of being? Would it not, upon any other supposition, have been given in vain? Thus again; the afflictions of good and virtuous men, have a natural tendency to improve their virtue; to invigorate their piety, and to exalt their aims. And under a gracious discipline of this kind, they often continue throughout the whole of life. But for what end? for none at all? This cannot be. And if for any, it must be an end that reaches into futurity. In like manner, providential methods, either of mercy, or of rigor, are oftentimes made use of even to the very last moment of life for the amendment and reformation of the wicked. Can we suppose that they are to prove finally abortive? We would only observe farther in this argument, that, if there be a future state at all, it must be a state, in which virtue will be rewarded, and iniquity punished. This is not only agreeable to those divine attributes, upon which all our expectations of such a state must be ultimately founded, but also to the actual constitution and order of things at present. His Lordship indeed has observed, that by the present constitution of things, vice is punished, and virtue rewarded "*collectively*," not "*individually*." But this is an observation, that must appear to be directly contrary to fact. For who will say, that amidst national prosperity, all the individuals of the community are equally happy, the intemperate and the sober, the covetous and the generous, the man of natural and correct desires, and he who indulges the most exorbitant. Or who, that in national calamities all are equally miserable, and that neither that tranquillity of mind, which his Lordship himself ascribes in a peculiar manner to virtue, is of no account towards lightening the burden of them, nor that fortitude, patience, resignation, approbation of conscience, and chearful hope, which are likewise the peculiar fruits of personal virtue and integrity? By this specimen then it may be seen, that allowing,

lowing, as we very sincerely do, the argument drawn from a supposed unequal distribution of things to be of no avail, there are yet other moral reasonings fully demonstrating the reality of a future state; reasonings too of that very kind, which his Lordship insists upon, as being alone adapted to the subject, reasonings founded upon the attributes of God, the constitution of the human mind, and the phaenomena of the present state.

P. 503. As much as Christian divines are hampered by some expressions in holy writ, there are those among them, who appear very evidently to have disbelieved the eternity of the torments of hell.

Lord Bolingbroke has taken frequent occasion to inform his reader, that he looks upon this doctrine to be utterly repugnant to the divine justice and goodness. Yet inconsistently enough, he says, p. 506, 7.

I could persuade myself that they, who are objects of neither (*i. e. neither of divine mercy nor goodness*) and are not therefore pardoned, remain, if they do remain, secluded from the happiness of the others, and reduced to a forlorn state.

And this he speaks of as part of an *hypothesis*, that *contradicts none of the divine attributes*. But I think no one can need any thing more to convince him of the absolute falsehood and horrid impiety of such a doctrine, than to compare in his own mind for a minute or two, the idea, as far as he is able to comprehend it, of eternal torments, with

with that of an all-perfect and supremely gracious Being. Let him, for example, read over the following description of these torments, given by Mr. Reynolds, in his *Inquiry concerning the state and oeconomy of the angelical world*. Quer. xxxix. p. 303. "So high and great, so incomprehensibly
 "supreme is he (God) that ten thousand times ten thousand most miserably tormented spirits shall not in the
 "least be pitied, or regarded by him to all eternity. Ten
 "thousand times ten thousand most doleful sighs and shrieks
 "and groans, and yellings, and roarings, and howlings,
 "under the most exquisite tortures and anguish of spirit
 "shall not meet with the least pity or compassion to all
 "eternity. O the dignity of that Being, who has an everlasting hell to be the representation or triumph of his
 "grandeur! There he rides in magnificent, tho' gloomy,
 "state, and marches over a world of damned heads with
 "most uncommiserating disregard and disdain." Scarce can one persuade himself to believe that this author was here describing the God he worshiped, and not rather expressing in bitter irony his detestation and abhorrence of some infernal spirit, whom superstition had advanced to the throne of divinity. But how much more astonishing still is it, to think, that these words describe, without the least aggravation, what is really the opinion of every one, who believes the doctrine of eternal torments. If this were Christianity, God forbid that we should not rather prefer the faith of those good-natured Arabians, who believe the souls of wicked men will be punished for nine thousand ages, but will afterwards be received to mercy! See the Preliminary Discourse to Sale's *Coran*, p. 14. And as to those *expressions of holy writ*, with which his Lordship supposes those divines must needs be *hampered*, who reject the doctrine of eternal torments; it is on all hands allowed, that the terms "for ever, everlasting," and others of the like kind, do not necessarily mean a strict and abso-

absolute eternity, but that the sense of them, in particular passages, is to be determined by the nature of the subject spoken of. Now, when future punishments are spoken of and said to be everlasting, the perfections of God do as necessarily exclude the notion or belief of their eternity, as when hills and mountains are spoken of, and said to be everlasting likewise, the perishing and transitory nature of the whole earth itself excludes the idea or supposition of their perpetual duration. The denier therefore of the eternity of hell torments is no more liable to the censure, of putting an harsh or unnatural interpretation upon the *expressions of holy writ*, than the denier of the eternity of hills and mountains.

These are such remarks, as we thought might be most usefully made upon Lord Bolingbroke's philosophical writings. In our review of which we have met with so much inconsistency and contradiction, so much solemn trifling and empty declamation, such perpetual repetition of observations the most trite and familiar, and of every little historical anecdote or allusion, so many affected paradoxes, such excessive vanity and insolent airs, such a violent spirit of invective, such arbitrary maxims insisted upon as peremptorily as if they had been so many demonstrated truths, such palpable prejudice and dissingenuity, as would have rendered the reading of them utterly insupportable, had it not been for that facility and copiousness of style, that perspicuity of language, and vivacity of expression, of which his Lordship is indeed a very eminent master. These are blemishes so very conspicuous, and so frequently occurring, that it is impossible to look upon them as the mere casual effects of precipitation and heedlessness. They form indeed so many characteristical features of his Lordship's writings. And we cannot but believe, that he himself was fully aware of them, and conscious of a better manner. But the truth of the matter seems to have been
this.

this. His Lordship had accustomed himself to so contemptible an opinion of human nature, that he thought it not worth his while to be very much in earnest in any thing that related to it. And having so mean an opinion of mankind in general, he appears to have been not much solicitous about the idea which his own writings might give us of himself in particular. Be this as it will, very certain it is, that the dishonoring and debasing of human nature was one thing which his Lordship had principally in view in these philosophical writings, and which appears indeed to have been ever uppermost in his thoughts. He reduces us to the rank of a merely animal tribe. And, notwithstanding all his vanity, he was content to be looked upon as being only the first brute in the creation. By continually indulging himself in such reflections as these, he became, no doubt, better reconciled to that other grand maxim and favorite opinion of his; that the belief of a future state is intirely unsupported by rational proof or argument. And well indeed might this be maintained by one who held, that the moral attributes of God, his goodness and justice, are not the same, as in our ideas of them. For how can we ground any argument upon attributes, of which we have no ideas? And yet upon these moral attributes, as has been observed, must all our reasoning concerning a future state be ultimately founded. This degradation of human nature, this denial of a future state, and this impossibility of our having any true or adequate notion of the moral attributes of the Deity, are the three fundamental doctrines of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy. And we have seen under what specious colors he has endeavored to advance them. Human nature is degraded out of modesty. A future state is denied, lest the expectation of it should make us proudly ungrateful for present blessings. And the goodness and justice of God are affirmed to be not the same, as in our ideas of them, under color of vindicating his providence from

from the charge of injustice. But it is easy to discern what is their real tendency. In proportion to the low and dishonorable opinions, which men entertain of their own natures, must be their apprehension of the excusableness, and even innocence of any corrupt, base, groveling, and ignominious passion, which they may think proper to indulge. And at the same time every restraint, that might be laid upon such passions, together with some of the most inspiring motives, which, upon ingenuous minds, can never fail of having a powerful efficacy towards invigorating their virtuous pursuits, is absolutely taken away by the supposed destruction of our being at death. And as for the notion, that the moral attributes of God, are not the same as in our ideas of them; tho' it be urged with the appearance of doing honor to those attributes, and tho' his Lordship assumes to himself no small degree of merit, on account of this vindication of them, yet, in reality, it is vindicating them from aspersions, by denying their existence. It is just such a defence of them, as might be made of a prince against treason and rebellion. By denying his right to the crown, we certainly take away the treason. But what prince would be obliged to us for such a vindication of his honor? And if we have no determinate ideas of these moral attributes of divinity, where can be our security, confidence, or joy? This being the apparent tendency of his Lordship's principles, how much is it to be lamented that numbers of the allowed advocates for religion, should so nearly symbolize with him! Does he debase and vilify human nature; so do they. Does he constantly assert, that a future state is not provable by reason, but by the gospel alone; so do they. Does he affirm that reason has nothing to do in judging concerning the doctrines of revelation; so do they. Does he contend for restrictions to be laid upon the exercise of private judgment by national authority and civil power, they do
the

the very same. Does he maintain, that justice and goodness are not the same in God, as in our ideas; this likewise is done, in effect, by them, when they impute to the supreme Deity such a conduct as cannot possibly, according to our ideas of them, be reconciled to either. I therefore look upon these writings as a very seasonable admonition given to Christians to revise their sentiments, and most heartily wish, that this use may be made of them.

T H E E N D.



I N D E X.

A

- A** BRAHAM, *God's remembring his Covenant with him, Sense of that expression*, p. 84, 85.
- ANANIAS and Sapphira, *misrepresentation of their story corrected*, p. 121, 122.
- ARABS, *an opinion of theirs about the punishment of the wicked*, p. 186.
- ALEXANDER the Great, *his treatment of the Jews*, p. 88, 89.
- ACTION reciprocal of mind and body ; *reflections upon it*, p. 59—63.
- ARBITRARY hypothesis about the design of Christianity, p. 107.
- APOLLONIUS of Thyana ; *difference between the miracles ascribed to him and those recorded in the evangelical history*, p. 96.
- APOSTLES of Christ, *their success in preaching the gospel not to be accounted for, but upon supposition of the truth of it*, p. 95—97. *well qualified for transmitting the doctrines of their master*, p. 104.

B

- BARROW, Dr. p. 103.
- Benevolence, *not derived from self-love, but a distinct principle of the human mind*, p. 143, 144. *Universal benevolence a fundamental law of Christianity*, p. 134. *Every degree of oppression or restriction on account of different opinions in religion inconsistent with that law*, *ibid.*
- Book of the law found by Hilkiab, *not the only one then extant*, p. 14, 15.
- BOLINGBROKE Lord, *his style and manner*, p. 1, 2, 3. 187. *his affectation*, p. 2. 187. *unaccountable paradox of his*, p. 37. 145. *his gross partiality*, p. 4, 5. 102. *his amazing arrogance*, p. 36, 37. *his notorious misrepresentation of Christians*, p. 114. 131. *his inconsistency*, p. 32, 33. 34. 46. 54, 55, 56, 57. 69. 132. 153, 154. 160, 161. 169, 170, 185. *his sceptical maxims concerning the principles of human knowledge*, p. 39, 40. *An Anti-Socrates*, p. * 69. *denies that God is matter*, p. 56, 57. *declines entering into the merits of the Christian cause*, p. 150,

I N D E X.

p. 150, 151. *his manner of writing probably accounted for,*
 p. 187, 188. *Connection of his grand maxims or funda-*
mental doctrines, p. 188. *specious colors under which they*
are advanced, p. 188, 189. *their real tendency,* p. 189.
use to be made of his writings, p. 190. *agreement of his*
philosophy with popular opinions, p. 189, 190.
 Brutes, *Cartesian hypothesis concerning them justly censured*
by Lord Bolingbroke, p. 73. *Dilemma concerning brutal*
souls considered, and shewn not to affect the argument in
favor of man's immortality, p. 75, 76. *Bishop Butler's*
reflections upon it, *ibid.*

C

CALVIN, *his doctrine of election and reprobation cen-*
sured, p. 112.
 Canaanites, *destruction of them by the Israelites paralleled in*
other histories, p. 35. *relation of that fact no objection to*
the Jewish, *ibid.*
 Canon of the New Testament, *when settled, and by whom,*
 p. 115—117. *Genuineness and authenticity of the books,*
which compose it, p. 104, 105. 118—121. *their suffi-*
ciency for conveying the knowledge of Christianity, p. 103,
 104.
 CLARKE, Dr. *Remarks upon his manner of defending*
Christianity, p. 150, 151. *just observation of his concern-*
ing the truth of it, p. 151. *his censure upon those, who*
deny goodness and justice to be the same in God as in our
ideas, vindicated, p. 159. *his account of the design of*
Christ's death; reflections upon it, p. 147, 148.
 CATO, *saying of his concerning Cæsar,* p. 141. *A remark*
upon it, *ibid.*
 Creation, *from eternity,* p. 8, 9, 10. *of this world in time,*
 p. 10. *allegorical representation of it,* p. 5, 6.
 CHRIST, *did not intend to establish Judaism,* p. 108—111.
did not study to conceal his being the Messiah, p. 125—
 128. *resisted the authority of the civil magistrate,* p. 113.
his resurrection, historical certainty of that fact, p. 99,
 100. 129—131.
 Christians, *their different sentiments no objection to the gos-*
pel, p. 89—91.
 Christian religion, *the truth or divine authority of it to be*
inquired into as a matter of fact, p. 150. *See Gospel.*
 CHINESE, *authenticity of our accounts concerning their an-*
cient memorials, upon whom depending, p. 5.
 Conversation human, p. 43, 44.
 CONYBEARE, Dr. p. 104.

D DA-

I N D E X.

D

DAVID the Royal Psalmist, his noble description of the divine immensity, p. 124. his account of the manner, in which God first revealed himself to man, p. 82.

Death, phaenomena of it reconcilable to the future existence of the soul, p. 71, 72. 76, 77. Death of Christ, Scripture-account of it not calculated to encourage presumption in wickedness, p. 147.

DEITY, intelligible to man, p. 48—52. proper object of his contemplation, p. *77. original revelation of the Deity, by the works of nature, p. 81—84. his supremely great and glorious character, how dreadfully defamed among Christians, p. 185, 186. Imitation of Deity, the duty of man, p. 138—141.

E.

Elephant and savage compared, p. 50, 51.

Ephesian mob, p. 37.

Error, and its consequences, the only evils arising from different opinions in religion, p. 133, 4. a national conscience no proper remedy against it, *ibid.* Oppression and contention not the consequences of it, *ibid.*

Eternity, See Creation, Hell.

F

Fainting fit, p. 62.

Fall of man, allegorical representation of it, p. 34, 35.

False gospels, how to be distinguished from true, p. 118—121.

False pretensions to a divine mission or nature, how, p. 125.

Familiarizing ourselves with God, how to be understood, p. *76, *77.

Freedom of inquiry, a fundamental principle of the gospel, p. 134. Encroachments made upon it equally unjustifiable, whether by the priest or civil magistrate, p. 132.

Figurative descriptions of the divine attributes, use and reason of them, p. 85, 86.

Fitness, doubtful meaning of that term as applied to moral subjects, p. 161, 162.

Future state, believed by the Jews, p. 28, 29. taught in the Old Testament, *ibid.* Expectation of it no mark of pride or ingratitude, p. 145, 146. moral argument in proof of it, 177—185. certainly deduced from the divine persecutions, p. 146. 178—181. revealed to man by the constitution of the human mind, p. 181—183. Proof of it drawn from the present condition and appearance of things, p. 183, 184.

N

Genea.

I N D E X.

G

Genealogical table of the social affections, an absurd one exhibited by Lord Bolingbroke, p. 141—143.

Geometry and algebra, their use in the mental science, p. *72, *73.

Goodness and justice, a uniform idea of them apparent among mankind, 154, 155.

Goodness divine, proofs of it as clear and as numerous in the phaenomena of nature as of divine wisdom or power, p. 155—158. 168. as essential to the divine nature, as wisdom or power, p. 167. not necessarily bounded, p. 180.

GOD, his moral attributes the same as in our ideas, p. 151—161. 169, 170. 179. not a local deity, p. 123—125. See Deity.

Gospel, a uniform system, p. 89. imperfect reception of it at its first publication considered, 91—93. and shewn to be no objection to the truth of it, p. 93—97. belief of the gospel not necessary to salvation, p. 97, 98.

H

Hell-torments, a remarkable description of them, p. 186. whether eternal, p. 185, 186, 187.

Historian, the first could not be a cotemporary author, p. 12.

Historical authenticity, the conditions of it, p. 11—14. 16. 20. 22—24.

HOBBS, Mr. comparison of his state of nature with Lord Bolingbroke's account of the rise of sociability in man, p. 144. His state of nature how connected by him with what he supposes to be the first and fundamental law of nature, *ibid.*

Human soul, its affinity with the divine Being asserted, proved and illustrated, p. 136—138. Human justice and the duties of temperance and fortitude, how deducible from the moral attributes of God, p. 140, 141.

Hypothesis of the soul's ceasing to think for a time, remarks upon it, p. 71, 72.

I

JACOB's vow, not interested or craving, p. 30, 31.

Immateriality of the soul, of what use in the argument for its immortality, p. 71. 75—77. not inconsistent with the infinite distance between it and the divine Being, p. *77.

Infancy of the world, p. 8.

Imitation of God, possible to man, p. 138. the duty of man, p. 139, 140. usefulness of considering our duty in that view, p. 141.

Idiots

I N D E X.

Idiots have as many ideas as philosophers, p. 63. possess a latent principle of reason to be displayed hereafter, *ibid.*

Inquiry. See Freedom.

Judaism abrogated by our Saviour during his personal ministry upon earth, p. 109, 110.—Jews, their national pride no argument against the truth of their history, p. 10, 11. morally connected by their own law with the rest of mankind, p. 29, 30. not so contemptible among other nations as represented by Mr. Locke and Lord Bolingbroke, p. 88, 89. believed a future state, p. 28, 29.

Jewish history, consistency of it, p. 23, 4. 81—84. contains credible facts, p. 16—20. not corrupted between the time of Moses and David, p. 16.

JUSTIN (historian) a collateral evidence to the credibility of the Mosaiical history, p. 25. the particulars of his evidence produced, p. 26, 27.

K

Kings their consciences brought into subjection by Lord Bolingbroke's national religion, p. 132.

Kingdom of Christ, his own description of it, p. 128.

Knowledge divine, asserted to be by ideas, p. 37—39.

L

Law of Moses, its weak and uncertain operation no objection to its divine authority, p. 33, 34. 107, 108. The command for reading it once in seven years, no ground for suspecting forgery and corruption in the present Pentateuch, p. 15, 16.

Le Clerc, Mr. p. 116.

LOCKE, Mr. passage in his Reasonableness of Christianity animadverted upon, p. 88. another in the same treatise, p. 127. a notion of his concerning spirit vindicated against the exceptions of Lord Bolingbroke, p. 54—57.

LONGINUS, his honorable testimony given to Moses, p. 7.

LUCRETIVUS, p. *77, &c.

M

Madness, p. 62.

Magic, what, p. 100, 101. will not account for Miracles, *ibid.*

Man, final cause of his creation, p. 162—165. Strange description of him, p. 43. not to be numbered among the mere animal brute. p. 44. 50, 51. 183.

Matter, the corruptions of it no proof of the annihilation of thinking beings, p. 10. nor its final dissolution, *ibid.*

Meant for meant, &c. p. 44.

N 2

Mental

I N D E X.

- Mental science, vindication of it**, p. 53, 54. * 69—* 75. *its clearness*, p. * 70. * 73. *its copiousness*, p. 53, 54. 69, * 70, 71, 72.
- Mental microscopes and telescopes**, p. * 71, 72.
- Mind, phaenomena of it, method of discovering them**, p. 53, 54. * 69. *its high prerogative, and noble superiority over sense and matter asserted*, p. * 74, 75.
- Miracles, those of Christ and his apostles compared, in point of credibility, with those of Apollonius Thyaneus, and other ancient impostors, and with modern, popish ones**, p. 94—97. *those of our blessed Saviour, chiefly wrought out of Jerusalem*, p. 128. *this circumstance no objection to their credibility*, p. 129. *that which attended St. Paul's conversion well-attested*, p. 122, 123. *stands upon the same footing with the other miracles of the gospel*, p. 123.
- Moral ideas, not fluctuating**, p. 45, 47. *not depending upon memory*, p. 45. *nor upon the instrumentality of sense*, p. 45, 46.
- Moral doctrine, one reason of its little efficacy, both in heathen and in Christian countries assigned**, p. 148; 149.
- Moral principles, their importance not sufficiently attended to in the public offices of religion**, p. 48.
- Moral attributes. See Deity, God.**
- MORE, Dr. Henry; cited**, p. 159.
- MOSES, his account of the creation of the world**, p. 5—7. *Agreement of it with the Copernican system*, p. 5, 6. *honorable to the Deity*, p. 6, 7. *his history has all the proper marks of historical credibility*, p. 10—27. *was published amongst a people able to judge of the truth of the facts recorded in it*, p. 13. *composed from sufficient materials*, p. 12, 13. *received as authentic in the age immediately following the publication of it*, p. 13, 14. *is attested by different witnesses*, p. 22, 23. *relates facts of the same general nature, with those that are to be met with in all other histories*, p. 16—20. *collateral evidence in favor of it*, p. 20—22, 24—27. *most fundamental principle of his religion repugnant to the notion of a tutelar local Deity*, p. 124.
- Mosaic account of the early rise of polytheism and idolatry consistent with itself**, p. 81, 82.

I N D E X;

N

- National religion, p. 131—134.
 Nature, *See* Hobbes, Religion.
 Nature, human. *See* Human soul.
 Natural affections, p. 84. 141—144.

O.

- Old age, *the phaenomena of it considered*, p. *77—79.
 Opinions, *diversity of them in religion*, p. 89, 90, 91. *Evils arising from it, what*, p. 133, 134.
 ORIGEN, *his judgment concerning the different sentiments of Christians in matters of religion vindicated*, p. 90, 91.

P

- Passive obedience, *not taught by St. Paul, or by any other of the apostles, or by Christ himself*, p. 113.
 PAUL, St. *his gospel not different from the other apostles, nor from the gospel of Christ*, p. 111—114. *his conversion*, p. 122, 123. *his testimony to the resurrection of Christ*, p. 129, *his account of it credible*, p. 130. *and consistent with the evangelical narratives*, p. 130, 131. *heard by certain Jews of Rome from morning to night*, p. 101.
 PRIDEAUX, Dr. *citations from his Connection*, p. 88, 89.
 Philosophy, *that of mind a real science, as well as that of body*, p. *70.
 PTOLEMY Soter, *privileges granted by him to the Jews of Alexandria*, p. 89.

Q

- Questions, *childish and impertinent ones about heaven and hell*, p. 86.

R

- Raillery, *two different kinds of it specified*, p. 37.
 Rationals degraded, p. 41—44.
 Religion, *that of nature and that of Christianity, both of them real, tho' neither of them universally successful*, p. 106, 107. *See* Christian.
 Resurrection of Christ, *incontestable evidence of it*, p. 99, 100. p. 129—131.
 REYNOLDS. Mr. *his description of the supreme Being*, p. 186.

S

- Sabbath, *Christ "the Lord of it,"* p. 109.
 Sacrifice of Christ, *its merit and efficacy*, p. 147.
 STRABO,

I N D E X.

- Mental science, vindication of it, p. 53, 54. * 69—* 75. its clearness, p. * 70. * 73. its copiousness, p. 53, 54. 69, * 70, 71, 72.
- Mental microscopes and telescopes, p. * 71, 72.
- Mind, phaenomena of it, method of discovering them, p. 53, 54. * 69. its high prerogative, and noble superiority over sense and matter asserted, p. * 74, 75.
- Miracles, those of Christ and his apostles compared, in point of credibility, with those of Apollonius Thyaneus, and other ancient impostors, and with modern, popish ones, p. 94—97. those of our blessed Saviour, chiefly wrought out of Jerusalem, p. 128. this circumstance no objection to their credibility, p. 129. that which attended St. Paul's conversion well-attested, p. 122, 123. stands upon the same footing with the other miracles of the gospel, p. 123.
- Moral ideas, not fluctuating, p. 45, 47. not depending upon memory, p. 45. nor upon the instrumentality of sense, p. 45, 46.
- Moral doctrine, one reason of its little efficacy, both in heathen and in Christian countries assigned, p. 148; 149.
- Moral principles, their importance not sufficiently attended to in the public offices of religion, p. 48.
- Moral attributes. See Deity, God.
- MORE, Dr. Henry; cited, p. 159.
- MOSES, his account of the creation of the world, p. 5—7. Agreement of it with the Copernican system, p. 5, 6. honorable to the Deity, p. 6, 7. his history has all the proper marks of historical credibility, p. 10—27. was published amongst a people able to judge of the truth of the facts recorded in it, p. 13. composed from sufficient materials, p. 12, 13. received as authentic in the age immediately following the publication of it, p. 13, 14. is attested by different witnesses, p. 22, 23 relates facts of the same general nature, with those that are to be met with in all other histories, p. 16—20. collateral evidence in favor of it, p. 20—22, 24—27. most fundamental principle of his religion repugnant to the notion of a tutelar local Deity, p. 124.
- Mosaic account of the early rise of polytheism and idolatry consistent with itself, p. 81, 82.

I N D E X;

N

- National religion, p. 131—134.
 Nature, *See* Hobbes, Religion.
 Nature, human. *See* Human soul.
 Natural affections, p. 84. 141—144.

O

- Old age, *the phaenomena of it considered*, p. *77—79.
 Opinions, *diversity of them in religion*, p. 89, 90, 91. *Evils arising from it, what*, p. 133, 134.
 ORIGEN, *his judgment concerning the different sentiments of Christians in matters of religion vindicated*, p. 90, 91.

P

- Passive obedience, *not taught by St. Paul, or by any other of the apostles, or by Christ himself*, p. 113.
 PAUL, St. *his gospel not different from the other apostles, nor from the gospel of Christ*, p. 111—114. *his conversion*, p. 122, 123. *his testimony to the resurrection of Christ*, p. 129, *his account of it credible*, p. 130. *and consistent with the evangelical narratives*, p. 130, 131. *heard by certain Jews of Rome from morning to night*, p. 101.
 PRIDEAUX, Dr. *citations from his Connection*, p. 88, 89.
 Philosophy, *that of mind a real science, as well as that of body*, p. *70.
 PTOLEMY Soter, *privileges granted by him to the Jews of Alexandria*, p. 89.

Q

- Questions, *childish and impertinent ones about heaven and hell*, p. 86.

R

- Raillery, *two different kinds of it specified*, p. 37.
 Rationals degraded, p. 41—44.
 Religion, *that of nature and that of Christianity, both of them real, tho' neither of them universally successful*, p. 106, 107. *See* Christian.
 Resurrection of Christ, *incontestable evidence of it*, p. 99, 100. p. 129—131.
 REYNOLDS. Mr. *his description of the supreme Being*, p. 186.

S

- Sabbath, *Christ "the Lord of it,"* p. 109.
 Sacrifice of Christ, *its merit and efficacy*, p. 147.

STRABO,

INDEX

- STRABO, *passage of his from Grotius*, p. 25. *a collateral witness to the truth of the Mosaical history*, *ibid.*
- SANCHONIATHON, p. 4.
- Self-love, *not the sole spring of human actions*, p. 143, 144.
- Sleep, *the phaenomena of it recounted*, p. 64—67.
- Sceptical maxims, *reflections upon some advanced by Lord Bolingbroke*, p. 39—41. 101—104. 149.
- Sickness, p. 62.
- Spirit, *the idea of it as intelligible as that of body*, p. 54—57. *proofs of the existence of spirit as certain and as numerous as those of the existence and reality of body*, p. 69, 70. 72, 73. *as easily contemplated as body*, p. 73, 74. *as easily defined as body*, p. 70. *Definition assigned, ibid. and p. 54, 5. its essence or primary quality, what*, p. 70.
- SOLOMON, *his devout acknowledgment of God's universal presence*, p. 123, 124.
- Soul, *never sleeps. See Sleep. May be immortal, even tho' it were supposed to be immaterial*, p. 77, 78.
- Substance, *a substance capable, by its nature, of thought in one degree, may be naturally incapable of it in another*, p. 78, 79.
- T
- Tradition *historical, to be depended upon*, p. 21. 101—105. *Tradition of facts and tradition of opinions*, p. 104. *both may be safely conveyed by it, ibid.*
- TACITUS, *his testimony to the Mosaical history illustrated by the enumeration of several particulars*, p. 26, 27.
- Tautology, p. 3. 105.
- Test and Toleration, *how far compatible*, p. 133.
- Toleration, *when compleat, ibid.*
- Thought, *absurdity of supposing it superadded to matter*, p. 58.
- V
- Unequal distribution, *not imputable to divine Providence*, p. 170—174. *Impropriety of urging such a distribution in the divine proceedings as an argument for a future state*, p. 174—177. *the argument superfluous*, p. 174, 5. *inconsistent and contradictory*, p. 175. *totally inconclusive*, p. 175, 176. *at best defective*, 176, 177.
- “View of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy,” *remarks upon some passages in a book so called*, p. 171, 172.
- Virtue properly considered as an imitation of God, p. 138—141.
- Unity of God, *the original and most natural belief of mankind*, p. 83, 84.

INDEX.

WILKINS, Bishop, an observation of his concerning the human and brutal natures, p. 49.
Witnesses, against Christianity, none, at the time of its first publication, p. 99, 100.
World, this of ours had a beginning, p. 7. arguments in proof of that assertion, p. 7, 8, 9. Tradition of its beginning not the tradition of a fact, but of an opinion, p. 3, 4. originally designed for the habitation of man, and of the animal species, p. 165—167. innumerable other worlds, p. 86, 87.

Z
Zeal, specimens of a bad sort, p. 37. 114, 115. 169.

End of the TABLE.



